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The Week

PRESIDENT Roosevelt's plan for reform of the federal judiciary, including the Supreme Court, was by all odds the outstanding public question in the United States during the week ending February 16. Most of the leading newspapers were against the plan and a majority of these did everything possible to create an impression that public opinion as a whole took the same view. However, a poll of the Senate over the week-end indicated that the President needed only sixteen more votes for adoption of the plan. Of the thirty-four members not yet committed either way, thirty-two are Democrats and the other two are Messrs. Nye and Shipstead. . . . The conservative press gave another example of propaganda in the news columns through its reports of the automobile-strike settlement. This was generally described as a union defeat, although the terms gave national collective bargaining and the General Motors Corporation will negotiate with no other organization of its employees for six months. . . . Farm representatives meeting in Washington heard details of the projected new AAA, centering around the ever-normal-granary idea. . . . As the flood crest moved down the Mississippi, engineers predicted that the levees would hold and that the maximum height would be less than that reached in 1927. . . . The La Follette committee unearthed additional evidence of industrial espionage; the Pinkerton Agency, which had placed spies in General Motors plants, defied the committee by refusing to reveal their names. . . . As the Amalgamated Clothing Workers won a 12-percent wage increase, there were indications that the United Textile Workers would demand 10 percent more, last year's increase having been counterbalanced by reintroduction of the speed-up. . . . Yale University played safe by electing conservative Dr. Charles Seymour, World War historian, as its new president.

THERE were indications over the week-end of February 14 that a crisis is approaching in the Spanish Little World War. The rebels, wholly because of German and Italian aid, have recently taken the initiative in the fighting, threatening the Madrid-Valencia road, shelling Valencia from the sea, and inaugurating new drives against Madrid from the northeast and southwest. In quarters friendly to the Spanish government, it was urged to launch a vigorous counter-drive, to establish unified central command and universal conscription. The Non-Intervention Committee, meeting in London, recommended a ban on volunteers beginning February 21 and a blockade of the Spanish coast beginning March 7. . . . Repercussions of the recent trials in Soviet Russia continued; a mysterious interruption of service prevented Trotsky from speaking by long-distance telephone from Mexico City to a gathering of his supporters in New York. The exiled leader stated that French police records would show he was not in or near Paris in July, 1933, as was testified by Vladimir Romm. . . . Premier Hayashi of Japan made a speech conciliatory toward China and Soviet Russia, which probably meant exactly nothing; from Nanking came reports that the drive against communist China is likely soon to be resumed. . . . A marked relaxation of restrictions on the Catholic Church took place in the Mexican state of Vera Cruz. . . . Diplomats gathered in Athens for a conference of the Balkan powers at which the chief question seemed likely to be the proposed customs union between Bulgaria and Jugoslavia.

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SINCE so much of the country has recently suffered from being under water, it may be hard to remember that another large area nearly perished last summer, as well as two years before that, through having too little water. The two phenomena are not wholly unconnected, and the connection is not entirely a vagary of nature in taking water from where it is needed and pouring it where people don't want it. Man has a good deal to do with this maldistribution, and can do much to remedy it. The report of the Great Plains Committee, appointed by the President to see what could be done about the worst drought regions in the West, makes this clear. This handsome and enlightening government document, full of pictures, maps and diagrams, is an excellent example of how experts in various fields may coördinate their knowledge about a single practical problem and make useful recommendations. These recommendations cover a broad field—investigation and surveys, federal land purchase in range areas and intelligent use of acquired land, measures to increase the size of farms, development of water resources, a limited amount of resettlement, control of insect pests, zoning, establishment of coöperative grazing associations, control of erosion, better organization of local governments, attack on the tenancy problem. All these matters and others have a more direct connection than might be suspected with the effects of the sun and the rain.

WHILE there is so much talk of strikes, methods of striking, organization of the unorganized, competency of union leadership and the like, it is well to note in passing what can be accomplished without disturbance by a well established and well led industrial union dealing with employers who have had many years' education in the benefits of dealing with such an organization. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America have signed a national agreement with the clothing employers, in which is embodied among other things a 12-percent wage increase—all this as a result of peaceful negotiation. The clothing workers know full well, however, that this achievement would have been impossible without a strong industrial union built up through many years of struggle. It is no wonder that they intend to contribute out of their wage increase $500,000 to the organizing campaign of the CIO.

STEEL employers in the United States are engaged in a sit-down strike against the government. They are unanimously refusing to make 25,000,000 pounds of steel required for construction of six destroyers and three submarines in navy yards. This is not because the steel masters are pacifists, or because they are subsidized by Moscow gold. Their sabotage of national defense is rather a direct challenge to the sovereignty of the federal government in its attempt to establish by law decent labor conditions in the plants from which it buys products. The Walsh-Healey Act requires the government to buy only from employers who conform to certain minimum standards of wages, hours and conditions fixed by the Department of Labor. The purpose of the law is to prevent the government in its own purchases from abetting the maintenance of undesirable conditions which the President and Congress have tried unsuccessfully to abolish in industry generally. Whatever the Constitution may imply about regulatory powers, any purchaser surely has a right to say what labor conditions his own patronage shall encourage. There being no legal doubt about this, the steel industry apparently decided to use direct action in defense of its low labor standards. No bids at all were submitted for the steel required. Steel will not improve its labor practices, at any price. In order to keep from doing so, it is perfectly willing to injure the United States Navy.

NUMEROUS rumors of important European developments were in circulation over the last weekend, none confirmed and some mutually contradictory. We summarize some of the chief ones:

> Great Britain and France have decided to abandon the Spanish government to its fate, believing a rebel victory is inevitable. Soviet Russia is also cooling toward Valencia, on the ground that there is no hope of a communist regime.
>
> A report partly inconsistent with the foregoing: Germany and Italy are losing interest in the rebels. Germany believes she can get nothing substantial out of a victory by Franco because of the veto power of France and England. Her people are beginning to grumble openly about the deaths of Germans in Spain. The General Staff has clamped down on the sending of further volunteers.
>
> Italy is also coming to the conclusion that in aiding Franco she has bought a pig in a poke. She believes France and England would permit her at best to get only some mining concessions, and these for the sole reason that otherwise they would fall to Germany.
>
> Soviet Russia, seizing the moment when Germany is busy with Spain, is launching a new drive for the friendship of the Baltic states, seeking to undo the work of numerous and zealous German propagandists there in recent years.
>
> France is once more gravely alarmed about a possible German assault on Czechoslovakia. Such an attack is considered more likely now than a year hence, because the British and French rearmament programs will not be completed for about that length of time.
>
> A Hapsburg restoration is possible in Vienna, the Austrians taking advantage of the preoccupation of the major European powers in Spain. Dictator Schuschnigg lent some weight to this report by observing that nothing will happen until and unless he decrees it.
>
> Germany is again plotting an uprising against the present Austrian government, being disappointed at Schuschnigg's failure to carry out the terms of the German-Austrian agreement made last July.
>
> Soviet Russia has abandoned all hope of any substantial French assistance in case she is attacked by Germany and her military plans are being based on defense through her own strength alone.

We repeat, there is no definite evidence for the truth of any of these reports. Some, it is obvious,

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are more probable than others. None, however, is wholly improbable. Perhaps the best comment on the whole group of them is the report just issued by the Foreign Policy Association on present world-wide expenditures for armament. In the last two years, says this report, annual expenditures for war purposes have more than doubled, increasing from about $5,000,000,000 to almost $11,000,000,000. The largest part of this total, and the largest proportionate increase, has taken place in Europe, whose expenditures have gone from $3,500,000,000 to $8,879,000,000. Even the most naïve apologist for militarism can no longer pretend that such expenditures are insurance against war. Conflict may or may not come, but this spending is done in preparation for it.

CONSERVATIVE American newspapers, which means nearly all the important ones in the chief cities, took a terrific beating in the election last autumn when they tried unsuccessfully to jam Governor Landon down the American gullet. Today, the same papers are engaged in an endeavor to defeat President Roosevelt's Supreme Court proposal. They are using just the methods they employed before: hysterical editorializing, plus suppression and misrepresentation in their news columns. With the customary few honorable exceptions, these papers are giving all the space possible to opponents of the plan, while individuals or groups who support it have their views tucked away in odd corners or altogether omitted. Mrs. Evelyn Crowell pointed out in The New Republic of January 13 that in the last session of Congress the press was 100-percent ineffective in getting results, and it seems likely that the precedent will be followed in this case. If so, the publishers will have only themselves to blame for another serious blow to their prestige. It is possible, of course, to oppose the President's plan on the ground that it is a bad thing for the country as a whole; but the opposition of the press, and the way it is recorded, strongly suggests that the publishers are against the scheme because, as prosperous business men, they fear it will adversely affect their own pocketbooks.

THE record of spying on labor uncovered by the La Follette committee gets prettier and prettier. It has now been shown that in two and a half years beginning in January, 1934, the General Motors Corporation spent at least $839,000 for detective work. Of this, nearly half a million went to the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. Hundreds of spies were put into the plants, primarily to find out the names of men active in union work. When the company's director of industrial relations ordered this work stopped, one of his assistants secretly countermanded the order. A spy was sent to the home community of John L. Lewis, obviously in the attempt to "get something on him." There was no hesitation in putting spies even on Edward McGrady, Assistant Secretary of Labor, and Robert Pinkerton, head of the agency, a sullen and hostile witness, stated from the stand that he was prepared to do the same thing with the members of the committee themselves. Pinkerton has defied the committee, which ordered him to reveal the names of his operatives in GM plants, and is in danger of contempt proceedings. His own statement that if the names of his stool-pigeons were known their lives would be in danger is sufficient comment on the sort of business in which he and the General Motors Corporation have been engaged.

ITALIAN aid to the Spanish rebels has now reached the stage where newspapers in Rome are actually bragging about it. The New York Times reports that large headlines were used in many papers to proclaim the fall of Malaga as a victory for Italian arms. Stefani, the official government news agency, sent out reprints of dispatches in foreign newspapers in which it was estimated that no less than 15,000 newly arrived Italian troops had taken part in the drive on Malaga, thus aiding General Franco's Moors, Germans and Fascists in their butchery of the Spanish people. Meanwhile, the quality of the rebel leadership is indicated by a collection of official proclamations from Franco, Queipo de Llano and others, assembled by Nofrontier News Service. One statement from Queipo de Llano says: "For our final victory, three or four million Spaniards must die. If they do not die on the field of battle, I promise on my honor that they will be shot by our legionaries and our Moroccan troops." Franco is quoted as saying, "The bombardment of Madrid will be continued until the city surrenders. We shall have to destroy one part of the town after another." A Moroccan commander rallied his mercenaries with the pronouncement: "Soldiers, forward to the storming of Madrid! In a week we shall set you free, and then you can do as you like. In Madrid there is everything. If you like a thing and want it, we shall close our eyes." Evidence of the difficulty encountered by the American public in getting accurate news of Spain shows up in a poll conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion. Among the persons questioned, 66 percent replied either that they were neutral or had formed no opinion about the Spanish conflict. Of those who took a stand 22 percent favored the loyalists and 12 percent favored the rebels.

SENATOR Robert Reynolds of North Carolina has never been adverse to publicity. Twice, of late, he has figured in the news: (1) when he accepted $1,000 to endorse a brand of cigarettes and (2) when he kissed—three times, count 'em!—Miss Jean Harlow. Photographers were naturally on hand and in one of the pictures the distinguished Senator is showing holding a lighted cigarette (the brand he endorsed, of course) and kissing Miss Harlow at the same time. We cannot help but admire this bit of adroitness (by which we mean Miss Harlow), but we can think of far more imaginative

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things to do. If Senator Reynolds had worn a lastex bathing suit, for example, or was carried in the trunk of an elephant—while smoking his cigarette and also kissing Miss Harlow—well, that *would* have made a picture. We dare you to try it, Senator.

RECENT labor news: A few days after the end of the Pacific Coast maritime strike, 500 members of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America at San Pedro, California, returned to work having gained a six-cent hourly wage increase and hiring through union halls. . . . The policy committee of the United Mine Workers of America adopted a resolution February 15 instructing the officers of the union to expel William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, from the union for "anti-union, strikebreaking statements" about the recent auto strike. Under the UMWA constitution Mr. Green will be called before a committee of his local union and its verdict can then be appealed through subdistrict and district to the executive board. He said that he would consider expulsion "an act of persecution and reprisal," but he could continue in his office as president of the A.F. of L. since he holds a card of the American Federation of Musicians. . . . The "slowdown" strike, in which the workers just go through the motions, doing as little as possible, has been taking place at the Spicer Manufacturing Company of Toledo, Ohio, where the strikers are demanding wage increases of five cents an hour for the day workers and eight cents an hour for night workers. Production has dropped to eight percent of normal. . . . Pickets before the Berkshire Knitting Mills, Reading, Pennsylvania, who have been on strike since October 1, were again attacked by police and special deputies February 10. Other textile plants now on strike are the Duffy Silk Company and the Millfay Mills, both at Buffalo, New York, and the Alanna Hosiery Mills, at Quakertown, Pennsylvania.

The CIO Breaks Through

MANY OF the newspapers which had been condemning the General Motors strikers and predicting their defeat were quick to comment, after the settlement was announced, that they had not been successful and that their leadership had failed in this first great test of the Committee for Industrial Organization. The anti-union editorial commentators were hastily joined in this stand by President William Green of the A.F. of L.; who called the settlement a defeat and used it as an object lesson in lack of labor unity. The strikers and their officers, on the other hand, celebrated the occasion as a great victory. Both sides, of course, allowed their hopes to influence their judgment, since a victory for the United Automobile Workers and the CIO means an impetus to industrial-union organization not only in the motor plants but throughout the country. One could almost use opinions about the outcome of the strike as a psychological test of emotional attitudes toward John L. Lewis and the CIO.

It is highly absurd to interpret the settlement, as many commentators did, as a defeat for the union because the men did not win everything they had demanded. Particularly absurd was Mr. Green's statement that the union was defeated because it did not win the closed shop—something it had not even asked for. Nobody knows better than he that in framing demands preliminary to negotiation, unions habitually ask for more than they expect to get, just as do litigants at the bar and most other persons engaged in controversy. The two extreme poles which set the measure of results in a case like this are a complete victory, consisting of the winning of every demand without qualification, and a complete defeat, consisting of no concessions whatever by the employer, the breaking of the strike, and the unconditional return to work of as many strikers as the employer is willing to rehire on his own terms. It is obvious that neither of these results occurred.

The most important demands of the union in this case were those which concerned establishing itself as a collective-bargaining agent, with a chance to grow and become more powerful. Such demands are always prominent in the case of new unions which have not yet been recognized. Before the strike, the company would not deal with the union on a national basis but only plant by plant, and there only in handling grievances of its members. Such conferences were of course unsuccessful in expressing the desires of the men concerning general company policies like hours and wages. The union therefore asked a national conference leading to a national agreement covering all the company's employees, and it demanded that the company regard it as the sole bargaining agent for its employees.

The settlement of the strike was achieved by the equivalent of a national conference, and was embodied in an agreement to confer, signed by national officers both of the company and of the union. It is therefore fair to say that the union won a national recognition it had not previously had. The demand to be considered as sole bargaining agent of the company's employees was compromised. The conference is to set wages, hours and working conditions for the union's members in all the company's plants, and any concessions granted to union members are to be extended to all others in similar positions.

This is tantamount to making the union the bargaining agent for all the workers, unless some other organization can bargain and win better conditions for its members—a most unlikely event. Furthermore, the company, in a letter to Governor Murphy, specifically pledged itself not to bargain with any other agency in the twenty plants closed by the strike, during the next six months which are allowed for negotiations, unless Mr. Murphy consents in the public interest. This is a good way for the corpora-

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tion to save its face on a question of principle while in substance assuring the union that in these crucial plants it will be the sole bargaining agency in drawing up the forthcoming agreement. Such roundabout concessions are far from unknown in negotiated settlements; it is the facts that count rather than the words. If the union actually is the sole bargaining agent in the crucial twenty plants and succeeds in getting a satisfactory agreement, it will be supported by the vast majority of GM workers throughout the country and will in substance become the sole bargaining agent for all.

The other demands by the union are to be negotiated during the conference specified in the basic agreement. Nobody can tell what the company may be willing to concede about wages, hours and conditions. It has already announced a 5-percent wage increase, which it asserts was planned without connection with the strike, but which is bound to be associated with unionization in the minds of the employees. Its action in consenting to a settlement is such as to leave the union in a strong bargaining position. It will not penalize those active in the strike —even the sit-downers themselves, against whom it had obtained an injunction and whom it had threatened with forcible ejection. All strikers are to be reëmployed as soon as possible in their former positions. The union is not prevented from soliciting members, so long as it does not do so in working hours. Union buttons may be worn at work. These are not the acts of an employer who believes he has inflicted a crushing defeat on a union and intends to make bargaining with it a farce. The prestige of the organization among the workers is certainly increased by the settlement. The union on its side has promised to refrain from interrupting production during the progress of negotiations. But there is always a possibility of renewal of conflict at the end of six months if the negotiations fail, and that should supply both sides with a genuine motive to make them succeed. The stronger the union becomes in the interval, the more chance there is of concessions by the employer, and the workers will not be blind to this obvious fact.

The United Automobile Workers' union has not yet, of course, won a complete victory; only time can tell what tangible advances it may be able to bring about for the workers under its jurisdiction. But it has without question established itself in a sense in which no union independent of employers was ever before established in this great industry. The first step has been made, and it looks like a decisive one. The CIO, in its first important battle in the campaign to organize the mass-production industries, has broken through the enemy lines at one of the strongest salients, and has consolidated its position. Workers everywhere in the country recognize that fact clearly enough, and are taking courage from it for future advance. Refusal to admit the facts on the part of editors and old-time labor leaders will merely serve to damage further their own prestige.

Tenancy—A Way Out?

WITHOUT releasing the full text of its report, the special committee appointed by President Roosevelt to study the problem of tenancy gave out its recommendations last week and the President sent a report to Congress supporting them. There are, according to the committee, nearly 3,000,000 farmers living under conditions far below a decent, or even healthy, standard of life; and though tenancy is predominantly a Southern problem it has spread rapidly into other parts of the country. Stressing the fact that less than half of the nation's farmers own the land they cultivate, the committee, headed by Secretary Wallace, proposed the establishment of a farm-security administration which would be built around the present Resettlement Administration and supplemented by a farm-security corporation.

The committee also proposed that the new agency, financed by regular congressional appropriations, acquire farm lands and buildings and contract with present tenants for the purchase of such farmsteads over a forty-year period. The government's program would be augmented, if the committee's plan is adopted, by legislation seeking to make the tenure of the new owners secure during the forty-year period and to place definite curbs on land speculation; as well as to provide ordinary housing and sanitary facilities for the army of migratory farm laborers and to safeguard the civil liberties of tenants—especially the right to organize.

No progressive person will want to quarrel with any of these general proposals. Tenancy is an economic cancer that should have been operated upon years ago and the mere fact that it has become recognized as a national problem is something on the credit side. We don't want to quibble, or to snipe from the bushes, but we gravely doubt whether an annual appropriation of $10,000,000—which is the figure said to have been proposed by the committee —is anywhere near adequate for the job at hand. It is estimated, on the basis of such resettlement work among tenants as has been done, that it takes from $2,500 to $5,000 to rehabilitate a tenant family. While the estimate of tenant families in the United States varies, the number in the ten chief cotton states has been computed as 1,790,783. Reducing the problem to its simplest arithmetical terms, at this rate we should need some 450 years to rehabilitate the tenant families in the cotton belt alone. We can only hope, therefore, that the committee's financial recommendations were misreported. Ten billion dollars would not be too much to invest in three million human beings.

Until the full text of the committee's report is released we shall not know whether any cognizance has been taken of the relation of tenancy and cotton to the whole pattern of our agriculture. The question is too vast and complex to be dealt with here but it is obvious that some control over agriculture

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—particularly cotton—must be exercised if rehabilitated tenants are to find ready markets for their crops. King Cotton, as far as the South is concerned, has become King Curse: and there is little point in rehabilitating a tenant only to have him plant every inch of his land in cotton he cannot sell.

We have a chance, if we act wisely, not only to rehabilitate our tenants but to rehabilitate the entire economy of the South. For years the South has been urged to abandon its one-crop system and diversify its crops. The prime reason this has not been done is because, up until the twenties, there was more money in cotton, for the big landlord, than in anything else. Now, however, under proper governmental supervision, diversified agriculture can and should be introduced. It seems to us that, while the individual farmer should be permitted to own his own land, a system of native collectivized farming might well be introduced. This will do no violence to any established forms of thought or conduct because the big plantation has always been the dominant agricultural unit in the South and a coöperative plantation, composed of independent farms but operated from some central agency, would be, in effect, the old plantation as it should have been run—for the benefit of all the people who live on it.

Such coöperative plantations have already been established in various parts of the South and have proved their merit. They permit, for one thing, the introduction of the mechanized agriculture the South must have if its cotton is ever to compete with foreign fibers in the world market and, for another, they have done much toward solving the incidental problems of tenancy—diet, health, recreation, etc. Every beginning is a beginning: but if we are to attack the problem of tenancy let us attack it with all the vigor and determination at our command.

It Is Going on in Germany

IT IS generally believed that the human mind can only stand a certain amount of reports of misery and horror, and there is a good deal of evidence that this is true. So much has been heard, for example, of the brutal Nazi regime in Germany, that things now pass almost unnoticed that would have brought a worldwide uproar thirty years ago. Nevertheless, an item of information occasionally turns up that should make people's blood run cold, even today. One such is the list of rules and regulations of the Nazi concentration camps, recently published in this country, and its authenticity guaranteed, by the Committee on Justice for the Victims of Nazism.

According to these rules, prisoners are classified into three categories. The first group will be released after three months if they have never violated any of the camp regulations or been placed under arrest, have changed their attitude in favor of National Socialism, renounced Marxism, and made a written list of the names of the leaders of their political group who have not yet been captured. The second group are those who are on a three-month probation to be transferred to the first group. They were previously in the third, which includes all other prisoners, but "demonstrated by their demeanor and attitude that their protective arrest has brought about the desired results." There is no other way to get out of the third group, and any prisoner who is punished with arrest in the camp is automatically put back into it. He is not, however, told his rating. Of course, this means simply that prisoners can be kept in the camp forever, without any appeal. It is specified that "prisoners sentenced to solitary confinement at any time may never expect to be released."

A prisoner is given a number of days of arrest for such offenses as sitting on his bed without permission of his company commander, hanging linen in barrack windows, going on sick leave without reason (the doctor being the sole judge as to whether he is sick), or "bawling, crying, or behaving in an unseemly manner" (eight days for the last). Arrest means confinement in a cell, sleeping on hard boards and eating bread and water with warm food only once in four days. Other disciplinary measures, which are apparently used at random, are listed as penal drill, corporal punishment, deprivation of mail privileges (two letters a month), deprivation of food, lashings, solitary confinement and tying to a post.

Death is the penalty for an amazing list of offenses. Any prisoner who "harangues his fellow prisoners, or delivers inciting speeches to them in the barracks, spreads true or false stories pertaining to the life in the concentration camp, receives or communicates to others such information, induces others to flee or commit any similar crime, refuses to be obedient, or calls upon others to act in a like manner, willfully causes a fire or other damage . . ." is shot or hanged. "In case of doubt, sabotage is presumed." It is under such conditions that Thaelmann, von Ossietzky and their hundreds of comrades have fought for more than four years with unbroken courage and spirit.

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The Future of Foreign Policy

This is the tenth in a series of articles on various aspects of the next four years of American life. The series will be concluded with "The Next Four Years —A Summary," by George Soule.—THE EDITORS.

IN RECENT weeks, a series of dramatic events has served to keep American attention fixed upon affairs at home. As we look to the future, however, it seems by no means unlikely that the chief happenings of Mr. Roosevelt's second term may be in the field of foreign affairs.

With the passing of at least the worst stages of the worldwide depression, foreign trade is beginning to revive and international commercial agreements are being created at an accelerated pace. All treaties regarding limitation of armament have now expired; even the London Naval Treaty of 1936, whose "escape clauses" make it almost meaningless, seems unlikely to be ratified. The world is plunging into another armament race similar to that of the period from 1911 to 1914 and on an even vaster scale. In this race the United States is a full participant, though the annual burden per capita is substantially lower than is the case with some of the other powers. Beyond all this there looms the danger of another general European war—a war, indeed, which already exists on a small scale in Spain, where thousands of Germans, Italians, Frenchmen, Russians and citizens of other countries are at this moment engaged in slaughter. From Europe are coming more appeals to be added to the incessant stream we have had ever since the repudiation of the Versailles Treaty by the United States Senate seventeen years ago. These appeals, reëchoed by many American voices, tell us that in America's hands lies the balance between peace and war for the whole world; that if we will but intervene again in European affairs, our influence will be preponderant, and that if we do not, a war disaster is all but certain, one that may easily overwhelm Western civilization and bring about another Dark Age.

KEEPING OUT OF EUROPE

While such a national decision is a fateful one, discussion of it at the present time is academic. The American people have indicated decisively and on several occasions their desire to remain aloof from European international politics. It is quite possible, and many persons believe probable, that this country will ultimately participate in the Second World War that nearly all informed observers believe is likely within the next decade. If we do, however, the change in public opinion that will support such participation will come after the conflict has started and because of circumstances arising out of it. At present most Americans are concerned only to know how we can stay out.

A few months ago there were exciting reports that President Roosevelt had it in mind to call a conference of the heads of all the principal states for the purpose of maintaining peace. He believed, so it was said, that if Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, the Japanese Prime Minister, could sit down at one table with the French Premier, the British Prime Minister, the American President, in secret conclave with no thought of producing results that could be embodied in protocols or treaties, there was a good chance of turning the international tides against war. I do not know whether Mr. Roosevelt ever seriously considered such an idea, but if he did, I earnestly hope he has abandoned it. Several of the heads of states would almost certainly refuse to come; can anyone imagine Hitler agreeing to sit down with Stalin? If they did come, it is inconceivable that any of them would agree to important alteration of his country's policy as a result of anything said in such a conference. Finally, even if such a verbal agreement were made, it would not be valorized by the government and popular opinion and, most of all, by the controlling business interests, even in the countries where dictatorship is most completely supreme. The hope that peace is advanced by personal conferences comes out of what Charles A. Beard describes as the "devil theory" of the causes of war—the notion that combat arises from the personal wickedness of individuals who know the better and select the worse.

A question of overwhelming importance that receives far less attention than it deserves is whether the future interests of this country are best served by actively encouraging foreign trade and investment or by keeping our money and goods at home. Many persons believe with Dr. Beard that in the long run, we can attain a greater degree of prosperity, peace and happiness for our population by reducing foreign investment to a minimum and foreign trade to the legitimate quantity possible on a virtual barter basis.

In the past, as everyone knows, foreign investment, the competitive struggle for foreign markets and the fight for dwindling world supplies of such raw materials as oil, coal and iron, have been potent sources of international tension. It is by no means visionary to look forward to a time when world peace is maintained through the allocation of markets and raw materials among the nations by an international governing body. Secretary Hull seems to me to offer an argument that is far too naïvely simple when he says that to encourage the maximum of international trade through reciprocal treaties is

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a guarantee of peace. It depends on just what trade you have in mind, between what powers and under what conditions. If, for example, war is likely to break out in the next few years, the more international trade we have built up, the worse the trouble we are likely to be in, if we have not carefully safeguarded its character and conditions.

For the purposes of this article, however, dealing with the foreign policy of the second Roosevelt administration, a debate on the question of economic internationalism versus autarchy is a pointless one. The administration is firmly committed to a scheme of additional reciprocal trade treaties and to an increasing volume of both exports and imports. So far as agriculture is concerned, the problem of export sales will be somewhat aided if Secretary Wallace's ever-normal-granary proposal is carried out. But the general picture will not be altered thereby. It remains for us to see whether our foreign trade policies can be put on such a basis as to work for good and not for evil.

The Answer to Fascism

We have often heard it suggested that the most effective answer the democratic nations can make to the fascist ones is to demonstrate that democracy produces more prosperity, a higher general standard of living, than is possible in the totalitarian states. Primarily, of course, this is to be achieved through internal redistribution of wealth; but something can also be done by way of international trade agreements between and among the democratic countries that will give them reciprocal benefits. It has been rumored that President Roosevelt is planning another international economic conference, and there is a good chance that if it is called, he will attempt to work along the lines suggested—particularly, since the chief fascist countries of Europe are now living under such strained and abnormal national economies that it is hard to see what possible useful agreements they could make—or, even if made, could carry out.

We are handicapped by the fact that although the United States is now a creditor nation, we are still dominated by social patterns set before the Great War, when this was not true. We still insist on a so-called "favorable" balance of trade for no earthly reason, and we try to keep out of the country those foreign goods which are the only possible means through which our foreign debtors can pay what they owe.

Many persons have been puzzled at the extraordinary degree of attention the Roosevelt administration has paid to Latin American affairs, a degree entirely out of proportion to the parts that Latin America and Europe play in our national life either economically or politically. Probably one important reason is that Latin America is the only area in which the United States can achieve a success, or something that can be doctored up to look like a success. It is perfectly true that the feeling of Latin America as a whole toward the United States has markedly improved under Mr. Roosevelt's application of the "Good Neighbor" doctrine. We have relaxed our coercion of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean states to a notable degree, the only important exception being Cuba. We have mutualized the Monroe Doctrine, and although this action has little practical consequence, it has salved the wounded feelings of the sensitive Latins.

The recent Pan-American Conference at Buenos Aires was called by the United States for four chief reasons. First, the Roosevelt administration believed it could without much difficulty achieve a degree of success that would endear it to American pacifists and internationalists, troubled about our intransigence toward Japan and our staggering military program, which now costs a billion a year, not including any payment for any past war. Second, there was hope that a substantial increase in trade might be created through the better feeling that would follow a successful conference. Third, the American government was sincerely alarmed as to possible economic, and perhaps even political, penetration of South America by Germany, Italy and Japan, and wanted collective notice served by the twenty-one American republics that no seizure of territory, at any rate, would be tolerated. Fourth, this country hoped to obtain a "united American front" on the questions of neutrality, freedom of the seas in wartime, and the like, believing that a position held by the American nations as a group would be taken more seriously in Europe and Asia than a unilateral policy of the United States.

Disappointments At Buenos Aires

The conference as a whole was a sharp disappointment to the United States. Some old treaties for arbitration, mediation and conciliation were reaffirmed and some additional ones were launched; there was a maximum of talk and a minimum of effective action about cultural coöperation, and that was all. The great obstacle to the ambitions of the United States was the loyalty of the Argentine Republic to the League of Nations and, in a lesser degree, that of the fifteen other Latin American powers still represented in the League. These nations refused to take any action seeming to interfere with their League loyalty, and did not regard the escape clause, suggested by the United States, as going far enough. They want any action toward belligerents in a future European war to distinguish between aggressor and victim. The American President and Secretary of State sympathize at heart with this attitude, but opinion at home, both inside Congress and out of it, is at present firmly in favor of treating all belligerents alike, and the hands of the United States delegation were tied.

The inconsistency of the conference lay in the fact that President Roosevelt, opening its first session, made an impassioned plea to Europe and Asia on behalf of democracy as though it were the pre-

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vailing mode of life in the New World. But in fact this is not true. With the exception of Mexico and Colombia and Costa Rica, every Latin country is a dictatorship in greater or less degree. Several of them sympathize with and imitate those German and Italian doctrines on which President Roosevelt, presumably speaking for the Western hemisphere, poured such scorn.

No development now on the horizon justifies the belief that there will be any marked change in our relationship to Latin America in the next few years. The era of pioneering capitalist exploitation, with serious risks and gaudy profits, has probably run its course. The new type of South American dictator is far less likely to be the willing tool of Yankee imperialism than his predecessor of a generation or two ago. A substantial increase in our trade is no doubt possible if we are prepared to accept it, which it is far from certain that we are: American producers of meat, cereals and dairy products, for example, are not enthusiastic about opening our markets to similar products coming from the cheap land of the Argentine. And trade has to run both ways.

The Far East

What is true of South America is probably also true of our relations with the Orient: there is no reason to expect any substantial alteration of policy in the next few years. The two new factors in that area are the eventual independence of the Philippines, promised by existing law, and the sudden importance attached to several small islands or groups of islands which happen to be landing stations for trans-Pacific aerial navigation. Strong efforts are being made, and will become more intense, to cause the United States to rescind its action in regard to the Philippines, particularly since it was accompanied by economic restrictions that would work great hardships on the Filipinos if carried into effect. There is no reason to expect, however, that this situation will become crucial within the period of time discussed in the present article.

As for our general position in the Orient, it seems likely to remain as it has been. We are in sharp conflict with Japan over the right to trade and invest in China and elsewhere on the Asiatic seaboard. We have forbidden Japanese immigration to the United States in terms which this proud people regards as an insult to its national dignity. We maintain, and are adding to, a navy which is generally assumed by the experts of all countries to be intended for use against Japan or against nobody. In effect, we are already engaged in joint policing operations with the British fleet throughout the Pacific area. This policy, as everyone knows, shows up badly on our national balance sheet. We should save huge sums of money if we would scrap our naval equipment and reimburse to the full every American investor and trader in the Far East; but any such burst of magnificent common sense is beyond the powers of our own or any other government. In the long run, our Oriental commitments constitute an extremely grave peril for us, not less serious in that it is so unnecessary. For the next four years, however, Japan is likely to be too busy with China and Soviet Russia to make faces at us, and we in turn shall have serious European preoccupations.

No discussion of future American foreign policy should omit a mention of the instrumentality by which that policy is not only implemented but to a large degree created: the State Department. It is now generally recognized that the Department badly needs a comprehensive overhauling both as to policy and personnel. As to policy, it needs to be made more responsive to the general drift of the national intention, as reflected in the attitude of successive Congresses. As to personnel, everyone agrees that we need a larger number of men of high individual quality in the service, with a corresponding cutting away of deadwood. Particularly undesirable is the presence of numerous individuals in our diplomatic service abroad who let their personal prejudices interfere with the proper discharge of their duties. There have been well substantiated reports of Americans in Germany, and in some other countries, who are little brothers of the Nazis; while at the other extreme, we hear reports of American officials in the Soviet Union whose dislike of what is going on there is so openly expressed as to make them worse than useless in the discharge of their official duties.

Neutrality

The overwhelming foreign problem of the near future is of course that of neutrality. Is it desirable to try to stay out of any future general war? If so, is it possible? If it is possible, how and on what terms?

The first of these questions may seem absurd in view of the observations made earlier in this article, but in fact, it is not. Astonishing as it may appear, many people nowadays are talking about American neutrality of a sort that will seek to keep the peace of the world, or will ensure our coming in on "the right side" when Armageddon is resumed. Coming in on the right side could conceivably be desirable, but it is not neutrality. Those who advocate this policy ought to call themselves the Noble Interventionists, or some similar name.

For the United States to keep out of future war is undoubtedly possible, if we are willing to pay the price. To be absolutely sure of continuing at peace, we should have to take steps far more drastic than have ever been considered. We should need to become a hermit nation, without any merchant marine and with practically no foreign trade. It would be necessary to find substitutes, produced at home, for such present imports as coffee, tea, rubber, manganese, etc. Foreign investment would have to be cut off along with foreign trade. The economic readjustments necessary could hardly be achieved without a completely socialized state. Whatever

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may be true of the far distant future, Americans are not at the present time prepared for any such drastic steps.

A Possible Program

Is there any program that carries a good chance of keeping us out of war and at the same time could win political acceptance in the fairly near future? Persons who have been examining this subject closely believe that such a compromise with political expediency is possible. Its main points are:

On the outbreak of war, embargoes would be put into effect on arms, ammunition and implements of war to all belligerents and to any other countries that are being used as purchasing agents for belligerents.

No American merchant vessel would be used in trade of any sort with any belligerent, or in any zone of danger. This sounds like a huge economic burden but in fact it would not be. Government subsidies to these ships are so vast already that if they were continued, and operating expenses stopped, the owners would not be seriously disadvantaged.

American citizens would be ordered to keep out of all danger zones, which would mean of course that if they disobeyed the injunction they would do so at their own risk.

Sales of goods other than embargoed war supplies would be permitted, but only on a cash-and-carry basis, in foreign bottoms, title to the goods to pass before they were put on board.

Nearly all such trade would of course have to be financed from the sale of American securities owned by foreign investors and commandeered for this purpose by their own governments. To police such transactions, all foreign owners of American securities should be registered with the United States government and, in case of war, sale of these securities to finance belligerents' purchases would be controlled by an American governmental committee that would place them on the market in an orderly fashion to avoid disastrous price slumps. (Such funds at the present time amount to some $7,000,000,000.)

The United States government would accumulate large stocks of all essential non-perishable products now obtained only from foreign sources. Contrary to the general impression, a comparatively small sum would purchase sufficient stocks of such products to see us through a fairly long war.

Needless to say, there should be no discretion for the President or anyone else to discriminate between belligerents on a basis of moral judgments. There should, however, be some presidential discretion in the application of these various measures, in order to avoid being committed by law to something that turns out to be unwise in terms of the immediate situation.

Any program less drastic than this, in the opinion of experts who have studied the question carefully and at length, would have little real hope of keeping us out of the next war. Any program more drastic, in their judgment, would at present be rejected by Congress and the country.

A subsidiary problem to which insufficient attention has yet been paid is what to do in the case of a civil war that is actually an international conflict, such as that in Spain. We have passed emergency legislation embargoing arms to either side in this conflict, a measure that works an unjust hardship on the Spanish government, since the rebels can still obtain arms and ammunition from the United States indirectly, through German and Italian sources. Application of the principles mentioned above, in the light of existing international law, might well have been reflected in a ruling that would sell supplies to the Spanish government on a cash-and-carry basis, while withholding them, as we have done in the past on numerous occasions over many years, from the rebels.

The unsolved question is whether the American people really do want peace sufficiently to pay even the price implicit in the suggestions made above. Verbally, at least, everyone is a pacifist nowadays, but there is good reason to believe that once a war had actually begun, other loyalties would exert powerful countervailing pressures. If Soviet Russia were involved, for example, American radicals would want to enter the war as an ally of hers, while some conservatives, at least, would want to join the fight on the opposite side. There would no doubt be powerful influences, especially along the Atlantic seaboard, seeking to bring us into any war in which Great Britain was a participant, on the same side. Both these groups would be joined together, and greatly augmented, if there were a world struggle between the fascist powers on one side and a group headed by Great Britain, France and Soviet Russia, on the other. Of even greater importance, in all likelihood, would be the business interests adversely affected, or believing themselves adversely affected, by neutrality. Embargoes would be evaded, perhaps on a large scale, and we should hear pitiful stories about the workingmen who would suffer if the attempt were made to restore their effectiveness. Business done for cash, under the law, would be succeeded by business done for credit, financed at exorbitant rates by speculators willing to take a chance. The powers at war would engage in vast propaganda campaigns in the United States, as they did from 1914 to 1917.

My own guess, which is obviously worth no more than anybody's else, is that the peace sentiment is now strong enough so that in case of a major war before the end of the second Roosevelt administration, we could probably be kept out for ten months or a year. If the struggle lasted longer, it seems to me likely that we should be dragged in, unless, in the period from now until the outbreak of war, peace sentiment is mobilized on a greater scale than ever in the past, and its demands are recorded in effective legislation.

Bruce Bliven.

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Unpacking the Court

HAD THE President's message on the judiciary not come at a time when an impasse existed between the New Deal and the Supreme Court, it would have been hailed by lawyers and the press as statesmanship of the first order. They would have praised its thoroughgoing comprehensiveness and have noted how it gave expression to every worthwhile reform which has been urged at one time or another by the bar associations, legal periodicals, newspapers, attorney generals, and the courts themselves, to meet the accumulating defects of the federal judicial system and the mounting criticisms of its work. Such was their attitude when the President threw the weight of the administration behind the long struggle for the authority on the part of the Supreme Court to refashion the procedure of the federal trial courts.

But now that the President has molded these details into a composite program of judicial reform and thereby opened the way for a well coördinated federal system both in personnel and procedure, lawyers and press in large part are severely critical. While they give approval to many phases of the proposal they see grave danger and diabolical purpose in the proposal as a whole.

The opposition boils down to one point, *viz.*, the circumvention of the Constitution so as to undermine the independence of the Supreme Court, and to bring it under the control of the Executive. That is the fundamental principle which is claimed to be involved. But the particularization of that principle is found in the fact that the opposition fears the President has found a way to legalize the New Deal. Thus the opposition is political. And no one should expect it to be otherwise. Those who talk as though the court system is not a political matter talk nonsense. As long as the courts play their role in our government they will be and should be at the very heart of our political order. That is not something to be condemned; it is a virtue.

Assuming then that the opposition to the proposal is political, let it be met on that ground. On that basis what is wrong with the proposal?

It is charged that the President will pack the Court with Judges who reflect his own attitude toward current reform and recovery legislation. It will not be charged, of course, that this packing will be done in any subterranean manner, or that the Senate will confirm anyone who is not qualified as a lawyer and as a citizen to sit on the Court. It is merely feared that the appointees to the Court who are chosen and confirmed will be favorable to the administration.

And what is wrong with that? Certainly such a course cannot be said to be outside the Constitution. Perhaps the fact that it is within it is what proves so exasperating. It is not unconstitutional to appoint new Judges who will have the same degree of honesty, learning and patriotism as those who have so far rendered the legislative efforts of the past few years nugatory. There is nothing in the Constitution that requires new Judges to hold the same views as those who are now on the Court, or that forbids new Judges to hold views in accord with current political opinion.

But it is said that the proposal puts the Court under the power of the President and makes him a dictator. That of course is an exaggeration that can only come from desperation—from one who is waging a losing fight. The new Judges will be as free as the present ones are. They may or may not decide specific cases as the President or Congress would like to see them decided. If they should or should not, it will not be the first or the last instance that such a thing has happened. But assuming their decisions coincide with the desires of Congress and the President, it would only mean that the Court gave one interpretation to the Constitution or statute rather than another. And that is done in every case. It does not mean that the Constitution is destroyed or that the President has become a dictator. The next case will be a new one and the Court will be free to deal with it on its merits too. Moreover, the President's term ends within a short period and there will be a new President with whose program they may or may not agree. The proposal does not in any way affect the Judges' independence nor does it make the Court subject to executive control, and those who so argue are merely excited. The Constitution is adhered to both in form and in spirit.

But the opposition charges that the proposal is an ingenious way to amend the Constitution. That charge too is groundless. The proposal merely affords a way for the *interpretation* of the Constitution to be kept more nearly abreast with the development of the nation. Anyone who knows anything about constitutions knows that they themselves grow in meaning, in sanctity and in their protective value. A constitution must grow if it is to remain the charter of a political institution like our national government. Our Constitution grows both through formal amendment, and through interpretation by men whom we call Judges, who translate it in the light of the needs, desires and interests of the people. The latter method reflects the more usual and normal growth. Citizens express their needs, desires and interests in political matters generally by election of public officials, particularly in matters affecting the courts by election of Senators and Presidents, who in turn select Judges to interpret our basic laws as they may be involved in litigated cases. That is the American form of government. It

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is a good way. It is a slow way and a safe way. But let it be interrupted by any part of the machinery failing to function as, for example, by the failure of Judges to interpret our basic laws in harmony with the needs, desires and interests of the nation as a whole, and that way of government is imperiled.

By the last election the people through their confidence in President Roosevelt and his measures directed him and the Congress to keep this way of government in operation. His proposal is in keeping with that vote. Political? Yes. Who supposes it could be otherwise? It is the only method available for exerting governmental control over the judiciary in the exercise of its functions, or keeping it working in harmony with the other departments of government, and I suppose no one thinks the Supreme Court is not a part of our government and not subject to political control, however remote it may be.

Incidentally, if this method of growth be called amendment, it is a very fine form of amendment and one necessarily provided by the Constitution. It is a day-to-day method for taking care of those matters which cannot be cared for by the formal submission of some highly crystallized formula that could not be understood by most of us as voters, and in fact by none of us with any assurance until the Court itself had interpreted it in individual cases which would arise under legislation designed to make such formal amendment operative. Such a method of gradual growth saves both the exorbitant costs and intricate processes attendant upon formal amendment, as well as the unsettling disputes involved in the scope an amendment should be given. A large body of opinion, with which the President seemingly concurs, holds that if the normal processes of growth are permitted, there is no necessity for formal amendment to meet the problems of the present day. Moreover, his proposal provides a continuous process of rehabilitating the Court's personnel so that the normal processes of constitutional growth will not hereafter be interrupted.

But is is said, among other things, that such a proposal will rob us of our older Judges, who, through humiliation, will be forced from the bench. Let it be said that any Judge who would feel that he was put under constraint or who would resign out of humiliation because new Judges should be added to the Court would thereby indicate that he did not understand the American way of government. A court's interpretation of our fundamental law is not immune from challenge by the people through their political agencies. No department of our government is superior to any other. The Court's business is to pass on the cases presented to it. If its course of decision is not acceptable to the people, and they take constitutional measures to offset such decisions, that only means the judiciary is being subjected to the same check to which it not infrequently subjects the Congress and the President. There is no humiliation involved in the exercise of constitutional power. The Court and Judges are as much under the Constitution as are Congress and the President, and it is as much the function of one as of the other to exercise its constitutional power. The Court is as sacred as any other agency of government. Its unimpaired functioning is the desire of every good citizen. It is not yet sacrosanct. Surely there is no one who would contend that the Court's understanding of our basic law is above criticism or that its course of action does not at times require correction so as to support rather than run counter to what other agencies of government acting under mandate of the people believe to be the course government should take. No interpretation of the Constitution has finality so long as it is not approved by the American people; nor does interpretation call for formal amendment. Reinterpretation is always at hand.

The check upon the Court involved in the President's proposal is moderate, and it is a check that cannot be exercised and doubtless would not be attempted to be exercised except in an extreme emergency involving constitutional power. Even then the President would necessarily have to have the overwhelming support both of the Senate and the country at large, and this is seldom the case. It is safe to say that the check, slight as it is, could never be employed until the country had indicated its desires, as was done in the last election. This is probably the only moment since the 1860's that such a check has been necessary or could have been employed.

Instead of causing the older Judges to leave the bench, the proposal provides the surest way of conserving their lives and keeping them on the bench. With a large membership and a quorum of only two-thirds of its members required, the Court could do much more work and with greater ease for the older members. Cases involving vital constitutional questions and requiring a full Court are relatively few. So long as they retain their powers, the older Judges of the Court are invaluable, but they should not be obliged to grind out opinions at the expense of their dwindling strength. The value of such men as Holmes and Brandeis lies in their influence rather than in the number of opinions they write. With a lessening of pressing drudgery that influence should not diminish. Heavy duties of the Court should fall on younger and more vigorous Judges whose work would necessarily be made more acceptable if they were subjected to the constant influence of able and experienced elder Judges. The idea finds support in the administration of every other institution, public and private, in the land. Why should it be thought foreign to our highest court?

The President's proposal gives the federal judiciary the opportunity to develop into the great flexible court system that this country has needed for many years. It would be most regrettable if a partisan and doubtless fleeting astigmatism should be permitted to interfere with its approval. It provides a remarkably effective method for unpacking the Court and for preventing its becoming packed again.

LEON GREEN.

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Upton Sinclair

IN TERMS of his professional career, Upton Sinclair is one of the oddest and most spectacular figures in American literary history. This pale and soft-voiced ascetic, with his near-sighted smile, his disarming candor and his strangely prim and dated pre-war air of good-fellowship and enthusiasm, has been involved, ever since he began to write, in knock-down and drag-out conflicts of such ruthless ferocity that they might well demoralize a dozen hardened captains of industry. When you look over his career as a whole it seems to have a lot in common with those old-fashioned serials in which the hero was at the point of being pushed over the cliff or shoved into a buzz-saw at the end of every chapter, only to be preserved for greater hazards and climaxes that, oddly enough, bore no relation to those he had just escaped. Few American public figures, let alone American inspirational novelists, have written so many books, delivered so many lectures, covered so much territory, advocated so many causes or composed so many letters to the editor, got mixed up in so many scandals, been so insulted, ridiculed, spied on, tricked and left holding the bag—few, in short, have jumped so nimbly from so many frying pans into so many fires, and none has ever managed to keep so sunny and buoyant while the flames were leaping around him.

In his autobiography Sinclair pictures himself as a poet, a reformer, a prophet, a novelist, and writes about his naïveté with a humor and honesty that carry conviction; but the record emerges as more puzzling and interesting. He was born in Baltimore in 1878, into an old border-state family that had been split by the Civil War and that, a decade after Appomattox, had its prosperous enterprising branch, already adjusted to the commercial order of things, as well as its genteel and demoralized representatives of defeat. Sinclair was born into its poor branch; his father was a liquor salesman who became a drunkard. The boy's early memories were of his father's periodic drunkenness and remorse, of hunting for bedbugs in miserable hotel rooms, of dining with an aristocratic grandmother, in great style, on bread and dried herring; then of visiting rich relatives like Uncle Bland, founder of the United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company, or Grandfather Harden, treasurer of the Western Maryland Railway, who was recalled as a silent old man constantly carving unending quantities of chickens, turkeys, ducks and hams. At ten Sinclair enrolled in a tough New York East Side grammar school. At twelve he completed his course. At fourteen he entered City College and before he was graduated was making his living writing jokes for the newspapers and romances for pulp magazines. While he was a student at Columbia, before he was twenty, he was a full-fledged hack, with two secretaries and a weekly output of 56,000 words of patriotic drivel about the Spanish-American War.

He was intense, nervous, chaste, easily influenced, perplexed about religious problems and worried about sex, an amateur violinist who lectured his sweethearts about venereal diseases, went on fantastic bicycle rides of a hundred miles a day and suffered from blinding surges of unfocused emotion that he interpreted as symptoms of genius. At twenty-two he married and wrote his first serious novel. In the next four years he wrote three more, including the first volume of his unfinished Civil War trilogy, "Manassas." His wife was separated from him by her parents after the birth of their son and rejoined him to live in poverty in a house in the woods outside Princeton—they were sick, humiliated, borrowing money and begging for subsidies, so harassed that once Sinclair, "grim and implacable," forced his wife to return a thirty-cent table cloth she had purchased, and once he awakened at night to find her with a revolver in her hand, preparing to kill herself. They had no point of contact with their immediate environment. Sinclair had no faith in the poor farmers who were their neighbors; he felt sorry for them and he understood why they were poor and demoralized, but his essential attitude is expressed in his description of families containing "drunkards, degenerates, mental or physical defectives, semi-idiots, victims of tuberculosis or venereal diseases." Nor was there any companionship or strength or assistance to be drawn from middle-class friends. The smooth intellectuals from Princeton who showed up, paying attention to his wife, evidently aroused in the novelist such animosity that when he came to create the most despicable character in his works he identified him only as a Princeton man. His inspiring associations were his Socialist friends and benefactors in New York City —such people as George Herron, a former clergyman who had married a rich woman, or Gaylord Wilshire, a retired real-estate promoter of Los Angeles—wealthy radicals who were devoting their fortunes to the movement and who, as the sports and freaks in the mutations of capitalism, have figured more prominently in Sinclair's novels than any other native type.

At twenty-six Sinclair was a national figure with "The Jungle." He had a fortune of $30,000, had lunched with the President, had turned down an offer of $300,000 to start a packing company, and had been defeated, by the votes of the poor farmers of whose weakness he was always so powerfully aware, as a Socialist candidate for Congress. At twenty-seven he had lost most of his money in Helicon Hall and was charged with having started

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the fire that destroyed it, in another newspaper sensation. Thereafter his life settled to its norm of battles and scandals, breaking out in Bermuda and on Mobile Bay, in New Jersey and in a physical-culture sanitarium at Battle Creek, Michigan; in California and on Long Island—struggles over the suppression of his books; imprisonment for picketing the Rockefellers after the Ludlow Massacre; polemics at the time of the split with the Socialists when he supported the entry of the United States into the War; the scandal of the Harry Kemp-Sinclair divorce case and the sensation of his remarriage, with the disinheriting of his wife by her wealthy and reactionary Mississippi family; all building up to the Eisenstein affair and to the Epic campaign, perhaps the single most significant development, in view of the forces supporting it and the way it was fought, in recent American political history.

Between battles and during them the books were written, usually aimed at some specific objective, filled with contradictions and repetitions and wretched writing, beginning well and ending badly, revealing a strong narrative power unfortunately devoted to telling the same stories again and again. To a generation of esthetes and sophisticates their shoddy writing served as the strongest possible reason for remaining in the ivory tower; and their stock situations, stock characters, stock jokes, the obvious collision between their earnest simplifications and the complexities of the post-war world, their lack of finish and their almost gushy hippity-hop humor, served to dramatize the difficulties in the way of creating a working-class literature or even of a literature that attempted to deal squarely with political issues. That his books were sincere and unaffected, and that Sinclair had uncovered a great unexplored area of American life, only deepened the problem.

Sinclair's novels abound in unconscious revelations of his indifference to his craft and his lack of regard for the memory of his readers. In the middle of "Mountain City" you stumble across the same situation found in "Oil!" except that in "Mountain City" it has almost nothing to do with the story, and the esthetic effect is about like that produced when the needle gets caught in a groove of a phonograph record. Then too, Sinclair's favorite jokes and his after-dinner illustrations of his various reforming messages keep turning up like old friends in volume after volume, until they wind up in his autobiography, where he tells where he first heard them. The plots of his novels are so devious as to call to mind those railroads that were laid out in the days of land grants and that circle all over the map to take in the power sites and the rich stands of timber —so Sinclair usually works his books around until he gets to some corruption high in the mountains of upper-class life, branching off to touch on how county officials are bribed and swinging far off his course again to introduce mental telepathy as well as the problem of a wealthy boy in love with a socialist lass. Many of these branch lines touch on rich natural dramatic resources, but Sinclair is usually too busy staking out the territory to exploit it carefully. Even at the end of "The Jungle," which is his best and most deeply felt book, he went out of his way to bring in a manifesto he had once written and an advertisement for the newspaper that published the book; in the manuscript he had even reached out to Idaho to introduce the Big Bill Haywood frame-up, but he dropped it again as not having much connection.

But despite these lapses—and apart from the question of how influential they were in fortifying a whole generation of novelists in their political indifference—the picture of American society that emerges from Sinclair's books as a whole is in itself an achievement of a high order. Sinclair's moral strength has never let him escape an awareness of the degradation and humiliation that are the normal lot of the oppressed in our republic, and his honesty has never let him remain silent about them. The consciousness of writing primarily for a foreign audience—since "The Jungle" his books have circulated most widely abroad, until he is probably the most widely read American writer—has given Sinclair a sensitivity to aspects of American life that his contemporaries have overlooked or scorned as too ephemeral to be dignified in prose. As a result he has recorded and explained a wide variety of native phenomena, ranging from the ramifications of prohibition to the development of religious revivals in Southern California, and capturing those commonplace expressions of American culture that usually go unrecorded solely because they are commonplace. In the same way he preserved in his novels (where, in fact, they are usually lugged in by the heels) the jokes and gossip about the ways of millionaires and movie stars and politicians, the stories about Harding and Coolidge and Hearst, that it seems everyone knows too well to consider significant but that actually add up to an unconscious expression of the attitudes of ordinary citizens toward their heroes and rulers.

Indeed, it seems to me that Sinclair's major achievement lies in the preservation of such miscellaneous data rather than in his stylized and inflexible political studies. When he tells us how strikes are put down or sold out, or how public officials are corrupted, or how labor spies are planted, he is describing a formula, and with that his interest ceases and his imagination fails to give him anything new or fresh. But when he writes of such things as an automobile drive over the Ridge Route outside Los Angeles, in the days before the pavement was widened, then the musty details of road hogs and speed traps, of stopping to put on chains for rainy weather, summon up the already vanished mood of primitive motoring and make Sinclair a new type of unpretentious social historian. The memorable parts of his books lie in such details—the exact descriptions of how pigs were killed in the Chicago stockyards in 1904, the vivid account of

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the drilling of the wells in "Oil!" the picture of a Colorado mining town in "King Coal"—remaining when the hackneyed characterizations and the mechanical concept of how the society is controlled have been forgotten.

Van Wyck Brooks's criticism of Sinclair's novels was that they create a mood of self-pity—that they invite a workman to feel sorry for himself rather than to develop his intelligence and study the world around him and the forms of action that are possible for him. The point is good, but it is not very relevant: Sinclair has scarcely attempted to interpret working-class life since "The Jungle." His typical story is that of a rich young man who gets mixed up in the radical movement, and the drama lies in the dissolution of his ruling-class dogmas—the pattern of "King Coal," "Roman Holiday" and "Oil!" His strongest and most original characterizations are middle-class types like Bunny's father in "Oil!" or the cranky old single-tax millionaire of "Mountain City"—people more or less akin to the George Herrons and Gaylord Wilshires of his early days as a writer—while the miners around Hal in "King Coal," or the oil workers around Bunny in "Oil!" or the rank and file of the coöperative movement in "Co-Op" serve primarily as background high-lighting the situations of the aristocrats. This blurred vision of working-class characters or situations is more significant in Sinclair's work than in the work of his less politically conscious contemporaries. In "Oil!" for example, he found it possible to write an exhaustive study of the industry, including a long and vivid description of how wells are drilled, without giving an account of what the oil workers themselves actually do. The limitation does not merely result in a general one-sidedness in his panorama—it accounts for a blurring of the technical descriptions and an elementary sort of vagueness in the prose.

Out of Sinclair's later works you get a definite impression that his attention is focused on the upper-class world that he usually describes with a mixture of heavy-handed satire and emotional appeals that it reform itself. His imagination is filled with the intrigues and maneuvers and hypocrisies of capitalists—the exact fashion in which William Fox lost his fortune, the intricate detail behind the Teapot Dome scandal, the process by which an independent oil dealer challenges the monopolies, the limitless distortions and evasions of the newspapers, the inside stories of the Mellon distilleries in "Wet Parade," or of Coolidge's actual behavior during the Boston police strike—almost as if he expected to find, within this mash of corruption and plotting, some secret key to the history of his time. But his exposés are never as enlightening as they promise to be, and his reiterated explanations of frame-ups and wire-pulling never really explain much.

All his works of this sort came to a climax in his account of the Epic campaign, when he was himself not only on the inside but at the very center, and so in a position to know at first hand the secrets of capitalist political control. And "I, Candidate for Governor and How I Got Licked" is a frank and conscientious record of those consequential weeks that tells everything except how Sinclair was defeated. It is filled with disclosures of what went on in hotel rooms and law offices and newspaper offices—what Westbrook Pegler said and what he wrote, what President Roosevelt promised Sinclair and how the promise was broken, what George Creel said and what William McAdoo said and what Giannini said and what James Farley said and what Fulton Oursler said—how some crafty lawyers tried to disfranchise the unemployed supporting Sinclair and the way the plot was discovered—how Sinclair's works were distorted and where Sinclair blundered—how the Literary Digest poll was rigged and how Sinclair received the news of his defeat—giving an interesting picture of a political campaign from the inside and a warning of what a genuinely popular reform movement is up against. But it contains no disclosures of what went on in the ramshackle halls and the rented houses where the Epic movement grew, and no disclosures of what was going on in the minds of the masses who suddenly took political initiative out of the hands of professional politicians—although their unstudied words might conceivably be more meaningful and interesting than the exact phrasing of Roosevelt's unkept promises.

These paradoxes in Sinclair's writing and in his career are a measure of the difficulties in the task he set for himself. He is the first important American novelist to see in the struggle between capital and labor the driving force of modern history; he has hammered away for a lifetime at the cruelties and injustices of exploitation as well as at the grossness and insensitivity of life among the exploiters, and his books, with all their unevenness and vacillations, have a simple literal honesty about them that makes the work of most of his contemporaries seem evasive and affected. He has done more than any other American novelist toward breaking the way for a full and realistic treatment of working-class life in fiction—the battles he has been engaged in, the enemies he has attracted and the silence and persecution with which his books have been met being his personal cost for that pioneering work. In his concern with the moral aspects of exploitation, his strong religious feeling, his indifference to Marxian theory, his reformism and his hope for a peaceful solution of the class struggle, he has been the outstanding literary representative of the Second International, in the way that a writer of the type of André Malraux—intense, defiant, scornful—promises now to become the voice in fiction of the hard-pressed and violent life of the Third.

ROBERT CANTWELL.

This is the last of the Revaluations. A final comment by Malcolm Cowley will appear in next week's issue.—THE EDITORS.

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Washington Notes

The Richberg-Draper NRA Gains Weight—Okay for Hours and Wages—But Will the Trade Agreements Stick?

SO FAR as can be discovered, the substantial reality underlying Mr. Roosevelt's Supreme Court fight consists of three legislative measures: the proposed NRA, the proposed AAA and the existing National Labor Relations Act. Mr. Roosevelt is said to be determined that all three of these measures shall be made into effective law; the "packing" of the Supreme Court is primarily a step to that end, rather than an effort to alter the Court in a fundamental manner. Mr. Roosevelt is also reported to be determined on quick action. He would like to see the NRA and AAA reëstablished at the present session of Congress, by next April or May at the latest. It is possible that no additional legislation will be needed to validate the National Labor Relations Act. Four cases involving this act are now before the Supreme Court, and, in the present circumstances, the Court's decision is anyone's guess.

The proposal for a new NRA put forward by Mr. Donald R. Richberg and Assistant Secretary of Commerce Draper seems to have gained strength during the last week. There are at least three reasons why this plan should be taken seriously. One is Mr. Richberg's current position as number-one boy of the White House. There are only four persons whom Mr. Roosevelt is known to have consulted in the preparation of his Supreme Court bombshell, Mr. Richberg, Solicitor-General Reed, Mr. Thomas Corcoran of the RFC and Justice Samuel I. Rosenman of the New York Supreme Court, and of these Mr. Richberg was consulted longest and oftenest.

Then, too, Mr. Richberg has recently become a partner in the law firm of Davies, Beebe, Busick and Richardson, the senior member of which is Mr. Joseph E. Davies, United States Ambassador to Russia. During last fall's campaign, Mr. Davies occupied the specially created and mouth-filling post of chairman of the executive committee of the National Democratic Committee, the duties of which were reported to consist of asking funds from those prudent business men who had decided it was time to make friends with the New Deal. It would not be extraordinary, therefore, if the Davies and Richberg partnership should develop into an important point of contact between the administration and business.

Assistant Secretary Draper, until recently vice-president of the Hills Company, food products, and—like Mr. Roosevelt—an eager amateur yachtsman, is another reason why the Richberg-Draper plan should be taken seriously. One of Mr. Draper's collaborators, Mr. A. M. Ferry, has lately canvassed every important trade association in the country. According to the Department of Commerce, 90 percent of business has been mobilized behind the Richberg-Draper plan. This is by no means unlikely. While business would perhaps prefer no regulation of any kind by government, within the last few months the Federal Trade Commission has given signs of greatly increased activity, and as between regulation by the FTC and regulation under a revived NRA, business would undoubtedly choose the latter. A large number of business men are also disgusted and outraged by the new Robinson-Patman act, and fear further direct business legislation by Congress. Probably they hope such legislation can be forestalled by a reëstablished NRA.

The final reason for taking the Richberg-Draper plan seriously is that no effective opposition to it yet exists within the administration. The only group prepared to fight it is the remnant of the old brain trust, now decimated by untimely resignations. Mr. Roosevelt is resolved to have a new NRA, and if the Richberg-Draper proposal is the best that is presented to him, he may very well accept it. Once the plan receives the presidential imprimatur, it will be almost impossible to defeat it in Congress.

In order to give themselves room for negotiations, Messrs. Richberg and Draper have deliberately refrained from filling in many details of their proposal. In general, however, it consists of two parts, the first of which is concerned with wages and hours. An expert body is to be created to examine each industry separately, and to fix minimum wages and maximum hours. The Federal Trade Commission will be empowered to declare that all wages below, or hours in excess of, these standards constitute unfair competition. Employers who violate these standards can be brought before the FTC, and cease-and-desist orders issued.

This part of the Richberg-Draper plan is perhaps unexceptionable, although it may be doubted that the minimum wages and maximum hours fixed under it will be any fairer to the workers than those set by General Johnson's NRA. On the crucial subject of a wage differential for the Southern states, Messrs. Richberg and Draper have been discreetly silent. In any case, however, Mr. Roosevelt is publicly committed to wages-and-hours legislation, and a wages-and-hours law of some sort is almost certain to be enacted at the present session.

The heart of the Richberg-Draper plan lies in the second half, which provides for agreements on fair trade practices. It is this part that contains potential danger. The Federal Trade Commission at present has certain powers over trade agreements, but, under the Brownlow report for general governmental reorganization, these powers are apparently to be taken from it, so that it may become a strictly judicial body. The Richberg-Draper plan places this power of approving trade agreements in the Department of Commerce, and gives the Department considerably increased authority. Corporations applying for permission to enter agreements would, however, need to be clearly engaged in interstate commerce; no experiments are contemplated in the federal regulation of pants pressers or poultry handlers. Agreements directly fixing prices or limiting production would also be inadmissible, and all agreements must be voluntary. However, once a corporation had adhered to an agreement, it would be bound to keep faith.

This second half of the Richberg-Draper plan is criticized by its opponents partly because of its omissions. Published price lists and excessive discounts, these opponents say, do not explain the failure of industry to provide the country with a standard of living commensurate with our resources and technical skill. The causes lie much deeper, in such things as tariffs and international cartels, in domestic patent pools, and in the monopolistic control of raw materials. There is real danger that if such a measure as the Richberg-Draper plan were enacted into law, the

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country would be led to believe that the problem of the regulation of industry had been solved, when, in fact, its surface would hardly have been scratched.

The gravest specific criticism has to do with the plan's apparent failure to provide means of supervising trade agreements after they have once been sanctioned. Business rivals and consumers would, in theory, be entitled to bring charges before the Federal Trade Commission, but so far as consumers were concerned, this would be a meaningless privilege. Violations of trade agreements in the past have proved to be extremely hard to detect, and months of skilled investigation and thousands of dollars in legal fees have been needed in order to establish their existence. Since, under the Richberg-Draper plan, the anti-trust laws would be rendered partially inoperative, corporations entering trade agreements might rapidly succeed in placing themselves outside and above the law. The lack of an adequate policing agency was the greatest weakness of the original NRA, and there is danger that the mistakes of 1933 are now to be made over again.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

Commodity Prices Rise—A Knock on the Head for Purchasing Power—But Nobody Seems to Notice

PRICES are on the march. In a list of commodities I count eight that have advanced over 50 percent since last year; eight that have advanced over 25 percent and five that have advanced over 10 percent. Some commodities went up 100 percent.

If the automobile industry were completely to close down tomorrow because of strikes it would throw about 400,000 out of work. It would shut off a spigot of purchasing power which equals $50,000,000 a month in wages. Take $50,000,000 a month away from the purchasing power of the nation and what do you do to it?

If on top of that the steel industry shut down and threw 500,000 men out of work, there would be a shutting off of another $50,000,000 a month in purchasing power. Add to that a complete tie-up of the soft-coal industry and you have another $40,000,000 of purchasing power in wages shut off. The three of them make $140,000,000 a month. I assume business men would regard these three events as a national calamity.

Now an increase in price of just four percent, without a corresponding increase in the payments on production costs, would have the same effect as shutting down the automobile, the coal and the steel industries all at once. But of course prices have not gone up just four percent. That would represent about the lowest price rise. Some prices have gone up 100 percent and more. The effect of this, of course, will probably be to cancel the upward pressure of increased purchasing power flowing into the system from government loans and private borrowings. And if it is continued—as it seems destined to be—presently we shall see first one and then another of these raw material industries which have been boosting prices dropping by the wayside.

The effect will be to establish here and there in our economic territory dark, depressed spots, which will have a depressing influence on the whole system. Then we will see a halting in buying, some strange and apparently inexplicably discouraging symptoms expressing themselves. And if nothing happens to halt the process the gradual spreading of the depression to the whole economic scene will appear.

Every financial paper, every bulletin which comes to me, every talk with business men, indicates that the process of price-raising is definitely on the march. Unfortunately there seems to be no such assertive public resistance to this as once there was. The reason is perhaps because propaganda for the last five years has about knocked the public cold on price resistance, at least in the mass.

During the early years of the New Deal—and the movement persists—the public was sold the idea that the depression was caused by low prices and that all we had to do was to get prices up and the depression would disappear. Price raising, therefore, became respectable. The President led the cry for price raising. "If we cannot get prices up one way," he thundered over the radio, "we will get them up another way." And this was said with the spiritual excitement of a man who is proclaiming a principle of liberty. We saw men arrested and put in jail for refusing to raise prices. The word "chiseler" was revamped and became a term of opprobrium worse than murderer or rapist.

Only at the last session of Congress the Robinson-Patman bill was passed to enable grocers to keep their prices up. And now the League of Nations enters the lists with a proposal to call a world economic conference to get the price of sugar up some more.

And so people have been sold the naïve conviction that somehow the salvation of the world, the return of prosperity and all it means, depends on getting prices up. This probably explains the mass apathy to price increases.

Nevertheless, the resistance will probably show itself when the pressure gets heavier. It is only two years ago that housewives were rioting in the Bronx and closing butcher shops because of the increase in the price of meat.

But so bent is the business world on forcing its prices up that nothing will check the rise until the wounds have been administered to the system. It is my belief that the next decline will begin at this point. However, when prices start to drop we may depend on the government stepping in to do something about it. It is around now pegging the price of grapefruit by buying surplus grapefruit in Florida. It meditates pegging the price of eggs. How many commodities the government is pegging through the operations of the Commodities Surplus Corporation I do not know.

Perhaps some business men who value their business hides might be interested in raising their hands against this trend. I am not sure they can do much about it. But at least the effort ought to be made. Certainly members of Congress ought to have a look into the matter and see how far they are preparing the next collapse through the administration of such deleterious pills for this one.

Incidentally, it is worth observing that another old friend joins in the chase. This is our old friend the landlord. I notice the Industrial Conference Board's statistics show that rents have advanced 11.4 percent in the last quarter.

These increases for the most part have appeared in commodities. They may be expected to make their appearance in the retail prices presently. JOHN T. FLYNN.

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Richard II

King Richard II. St. James Theatre, February 5, 1937.

THE PERFORMANCE of "Richard II" seems to have made a genuine stir on its first night. It has a quite considerable movement and get-along in the directing. In the acting there are rough edges fairly often; but for this the argument might be made that it tends to help the effect of masculinity and brash events, and to simplify or speed along some of the intricate writing of the play. The casting has been done with a good eye for variety in type; and the individual performances thus take on certain additional aspects of acting. The mere differences in type, for example, between the two leading roles, the Richard of Mr. Maurice Evans and the Bolingbroke of Mr. Ian Keith, go a long way toward the two portrayals. And many of the more secondary parts came off with a reality that was convincing enough for the play's needs.

Mr. Ian Keith rightly presented a Bolingbroke about whose total quality and final motives you cannot make up your mind, and should not. In Shakespeare's own development of the character later on (see "The First Part of King Henry IV") a complex presentation, baffling to put into words but somehow intelligible, in the end remains. And yet an extraordinary clarification of the character lies in that later piece: Bolingbroke's anxiety lest his dashing son, young Hotspur, will turn out another Richard, without stability, without moral fiber; and to show his son the intensity of his concern for England, his confession of his own dissimulation in combatting Richard:

> And then I stole all courtesy from heaven
> And dress'd myself in such humility
> That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
> Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths,
> Even in the presence of the crownéd king.

Shakespeare doubtless thought of some of this long after he had written the play about Richard and as he turned the character of Bolingbroke over in his mind; but the germ of the whole portrait is there in this passage, for Mr. Keith to consider.

Mr. Maurice Evans, a competent and well focused player—which is to say he is busy with, rather than transformed into, the role in hand—gave as Richard a performance about on the level with his Napoleon in the recent "St. Helena." Nothing powerful or searching is achieved and there is a general lack of markings—by markings I mean a certain underscoring of moments where the drama of character and the plot of event touch on crises in the play's pattern. How far Mr. Evans should rub things in, select, stress, is a matter of opinion and for his own discretion in the creation of the Shakespeare portrait. Certainly one of the remarkable things in Shakespeare's version of Richard is this very uncertainty, a combination of charm, impatience, license, tenderness, weakness, imaginative passion, and in the Greek sense infatuation, which to them signified that you by your obsession invited the final wreckage of the gods.

We come now to a portion of the production that is out of class, on a different plane, with the acting we have recounted or the agreeable settings, and Mr. Ffolkes' amiable costumes. Mr. Augustin Duncan's John of Gaunt has all the magnificence and reality that is best set down as indescribable. In the death scene with the famous lines to England—this precious stone set in the silver sea, et cetera—Mr. Duncan created a basic effect of actuality, combined with an inmost splendor of style, that could nowhere else on our stage be even approached.

But while these aspects and elements may be of deep regard, they are not all there is to consider. In the light of stage purposes, it will pay anyone truly interested to go over Marlowe's "Edward II." This play, generally dated as 1593, was no doubt in Shakespeare's mind when he wrote "Richard II," dated early in 1596. Certain scholars rank Shakespeare's play far ahead of Marlowe's, because of the range and superior plane of the qualities created. The other side of the case, of course, is that Marlowe has selected certain traits and tendencies, full and clear as in Greek drama—and has placed these irrevocably within the substance and development of his play. The form is more consistent, the conclusion more inevitable. There is, as compared with Shakespeare's play, less delicate and discerning scope, but the sheer form and finality are there, and are in themselves a kind of language. As intuitive perception, grace of rather more minor understanding, and lyric dispersion—"Richard II" is grouped among Shakespeare's lyric dramas—this play is well within Shakespeare's capacity. But Marlowe's play of "Edward II" is miles beyond it as drama, though less comfortable as literary hero approbation—that is to say, this Edward is less permissible or admirable than this Richard. For my part I contend that the march of a bold and inevitable theme surpasses a figure of subtle complexities with regard to character. And I contend that firm lines in the dramatic pattern say more, ultimately, than dainty or passionately cerebral variations in psychology, two-thirds of which sometimes in Shakespeare may consist of sheer literary ornament.

"Richard II" suffers as a play first from the fact that, as every editor has remarked for generations, the minor, or perfunctory, scenes are done without much thought or care, though the main effects are ardently searched out. On the other hand there are scenes, admittedly free of all previous sources, Holinshed and the rest, that are Shakespeare's very own. Such a scene—done very well, with Mr. Whitford Kane as the head of it, and with a deep and lovely purity throughout—is that of the gardeners with the Queen. Nobody but Shakespeare would have imagined that, what with its lyric, homely element of growing nature, its symbolism and its visual image. But what the play most seriously suffers from is one single element that derives partly from the epoch, or shall we say the difference between that Elizabethan epoch and our own? It is something that is borne steadily in upon us as the play progresses to its end. I mean the constant elaboration, figures of speech, conceits, fancifications, involutions, not seldom characteristic of Elizabethan writing. When you hear Richard at some important moment twisting and winding, flowering into similes, tropes, birds, botany, music and rhetoric and so forth, while at that very moment something most important is to be swiftly conveyed, you might easily take it to be a case of eloquent weakness, impotent imagination, sensitivity, fatuity, circuitous but keen analytical insights, et cetera, et cetera. You accept Richard as a complicated dear

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weakling, doomed by his own nature! But when the stout Bolingbroke embroils himself in words and figures, poetical roundabouts and matching variations on straight themes; and all the dukes are perpetually wound up, and the Queen even at a tragic moment goes off with

> Conceit is still deriv'd
> From some forefather grief. Mine is not so,
> For nothing hath begot my something grief,
> Or something hath the nothing that I grieve

you can scarcely feel that it is Richard alone who thus gambols from the point, but also the poet and the age.

The fact remains nevertheless that the familiar magic in words and miracles in perception that are Shakespeare's constantly occur in this play, and provide the mind with a literate and often gusty evening. The last moment, with Richard brought in dead, and placed at the foot of the throne, with Bolingbroke looking on him, the silent court around, is a superb stage motif on Miss Margaret Webster, the director's, part.

It seems unnecessary to note that the whole play gains in occasional appeal by certain rather obvious parallels with recent events in Britain. STARK YOUNG.

The Bandwagon

Dust storms, drought and short crops in the Oklahoma Panhandle are reprisals for fast living of Oklahomans, say ministers in this region. These troubles are sent to recall men and women to right living, they say, and this is the purpose of a series of evangelistic services which will begin February 21.—*Guymon, Okla., dispatch to The Kansas City Star.*

Hasty Action Is Deplored. Sudden Move by Senate After Twelve Years Is a Surprise.—*Headline in The New York Herald Tribune referring to ratification of the child-labor amendment by the New York State Senate.*

LORGNETTES WET WITH HONEST SWEAT

Most of our debutantes and sub-debs, our so-called "playboys," are hard-working women and men in the business world. Some are clerks in department stores, some do secretarial work, some even do menial labor.—*From a letter signed "Polly" in The New York Times.*

EXCUSE IT, PLEASE

Fond of American movies, Vittorio confesses that he was a little disappointed to find that aerial bombardments in Ethiopia were less spectacular than some he had seen in films.

"The little huts in Ethiopia, built of mud and timber, did not give much satisfaction to the bombers," he remarks. —*From a book by Vittorio Mussolini, recounting his experiences as a pilot in the Ethiopian struggle, quoted in The Hampshire (Mass.,) Gazette.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic.—THE EDITORS.

CORRESPONDENCE

Trotsky: Friends and Enemies

SIR: Since my name is so often mentioned in connection with the Committee for the Defense of Trotsky I should like to make my position as clear as possible. I am not a Communist, neither a Trotskyist nor a Stalinist. I believe that behind the present tragic situation lies the initial failure of the Communist Party to provide within its own party structure and within the structure of the government which it controls in Russia any proper means of discussion or criticism or protection for what we commonly regard as civil liberty.

So far as Trotsky's own present case is concerned, I am concerned in protecting and maintaining the right of political asylum for him and hence for all political exiles, and I am further concerned in coming as near as we can to the truth in the series of trials and other events following the assassination of Kirov. There is no explanation of these events which does not seem incredible and which does not reflect upon one or the other faction of the group which originally led the great Russian Revolution. There is no explanation of these events which can take the deep stain off the men who were either guilty of the things they confessed or under pressure confessed things which would damn Trotsky and other men guilty of them. Emphatically Trotsky is entitled to the hearing for which he asks. I personally do not think he helped himself in his demand for justice by the extreme vehemence of his attack upon absolutely everything in the Soviet government which he helped to set up. But he has a right to demand justice, and justice is never "abstract and meaningless," as one of Stalin's defenders has recently called it.

Finally, may I say that I think that much of the value of any sort of socialism depends upon the capacity of socialists to assert their faith in an attitude and a form of organization that will prevent the kind of thing which has happened in Russia following the assassination of Kirov—I use that only as one illustration—and the consequent bitter controversy between old comrades in arms. But in saying this I recognize great and lasting achievements in Russia, which is today a mighty bulwark against fascist aggression.

New York City. NORMAN THOMAS.

SIR: We believe that the right of political asylum is one of the most precious of human rights. We unequivocally affirm the legal principle that a man is to be adjudged innocent until he is proved guilty. We are convinced that these rights cannot be consistently defended if we remain silent concerning the Moscow trials. Therefore, we have joined the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky. We are neither Stalinists nor Trotskyites. We adhere to our membership on this committee in the face of a concerted attack. We feel that the Communist press in the United States is lowering the standards of journalism by its prejudiced campaign to prevent Leon Trotsky from receiving a fair and open hearing before an impartial international investigation commission. . . . We ask decent-minded American intellectuals to join us in adopting this position.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN,
New York City. JAMES T. FARRELL.

SIR: We wish to address ourselves to liberals who may be approached by the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky which is attempting to enlist the support of liberals for partisan political purposes under the guise of defense of certain principles of civil liberties. . . . Since Trotsky is now safely domiciled in Mexico, the right of asylum is no longer an issue. The Mexican government and the American press have certainly allowed him full freedom of expression in his own defense.

Under these circumstances it is proper to inquire into the nature of the further activities of the committee. Its publications have included not only violent attacks on the Moscow trials, but bitter denunciations of the Soviet government. Speakers have gone so far as to advocate armed uprising. . . . The thirty-three defendants in the trials under attack all confessed fully the crimes of high treason of which they were convicted. Impartial observers and newspaper

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correspondents present at the trials have reported that the trials were properly conducted and the accused fairly treated. The demand for an investigation of trials thus carried on under the legally constituted judicial system of the Soviet government can only be interpreted as political intervention in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union with hostile intent. . . .

MARY VAN KLEECK, CORLISS LAMONT, JAMES WATERMAN WISE,
New York City. and many others.

The Case of Glenn Frank

SIR: I have read the letter of Charles A. Beard in your issue of February 3 both with interest and approval. I attended the so-called hearing of President Frank before the Board of Regents at the University of Wisconsin as an observer. It was in no sense a hearing as we understand the meaning of that term in this country, and the issue that remains is not that of the fitness of President Frank but the unfitness of a board of regents politically controlled to dictate appointments and dismissals of presidents and deans in our great state universities. . . .

We will have to await the good sense of the people of Wisconsin to work out a better plan of appointment and control of the University Regents. I think they have both the intelligence and character to do so if given time.

Chicago, Ill. A. J. CARLSON.

SIR: With all due respect for the opinion of Charles Beard as expressed in the magazine for February 3, I suggest that protest be registered not so much against the manner in which the Regents of the University of Wisconsin handled the case of President Frank, but against the attitude of the press, not alone here but throughout the nation. I have particular reference to the conservative press, which used the Frank case in a not entirely unsuccessful campaign to smear Governor La Follette. Granting without argument that no board of lay trustees is fitted to conduct a college or university without assistance and participation of faculty representatives, as Dr. Beard states, it must be admitted that there is no reason to suppose that a faculty-advised board could or would do better. . . .

The support given Dr. Frank came significantly enough from the conservative Alumni Association, from Madison's social set, from the fraternity row, and from the conservative Republican press. . . .

Sauk City, Wis. AUGUST DERLETH.

Hill Boy in the Bottom

SIR: Today I'm sitting in my room upstairs here—in a house completely surrounded by water. A cold wind is blowing—the river is rocking and the rain still pouring. It's a hell of a mess—saw people yesterday moving in wheelbarrows, trucks, wagons and on their backs. . . . Man can't interfere too much with nature. The water runs from these treeless hills like water off a duck's back. We need trees on these hills more than flood-walls and dams.

Taylor, Ky. JESSE STUART.

A Scholar Condemned to Death

SIR: I have just received from the government of Spain a cablegram which is self-explanatory:

> The President of Oviedo University, Dr. Leopoldo Alas, has been sentenced to death by the rebel Junta. We entertain well founded fears that the sentence is going to be carried out. This eminent intellectual has been inactive in politics since before the fascist rebellion. . . . The charges against Dr. Alas are: his having been Under-Secretary of Justice and member of the House of Representatives during the first Republican government, from 1931 to 1933; his having taken part in public gatherings of the Left Republican Party; his having lectured in favor of the establishment of a public and non-sectarian educational system; his having taken part, as a spectator, in an open meeting in which the pardon of Thaelmann was requested. . . . During the trial, several of his university colleagues testified favorably to his conduct as professor and as president of the university. The whole trial is a juridical monstrosity and a typical example of the persecution by the rebels against intellectuals, professors and Catholic loyalists. The University of Paris and other universities in France and Belgium have wired the Burgos Junta asking the commutation of the death sentence.

FERNANDO DE LOS RÍOS.
Spanish Embassy, Washington, D. C.

[Dr. de los Ríos, Spanish Ambassador to the United States, was formerly president of the University of Madrid.—THE EDITORS.]

From The New Republic Mail Bag

John Hall Stewart, assistant professor of History at Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, and a graduate of the University of Toronto, strongly criticizes the action of W. S. Wallace, the librarian at Toronto, in canceling the library's subscription to The New Republic because of an article on the recent British constitutional crisis by H. N. Brailsford. A resolution to the same effect comes from the Labor Club of the University of Toronto.

The case of Robert Durand, a member of the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians, who was dismissed from the Federal Power Commission last spring allegedly for union activities, has now been settled, the union informs us in thanking us for printing their plea for a hearing. The impartial board that heard the case cleared Durand of the charge of inefficiency, recommended his reinstatement and urged the creation of a permanent board to hear cases of this sort.

Another commendation of Lewis Mumford's "Letter to the President" urging retention of the Federal Art Projects comes from Edward Radenzel, a supervisor of the Writers' Project in San Diego, California.

The Maritime Workers' Benefit Committee writes us concerning an entertainment featuring Jimmy Durante, Heywood Broun, Bill Robinson, Benny Goodman and other well known entertainers for the benefit of the seamen who have just concluded their strike on the Atlantic Coast and some thousands of whom are still "on the beach." The show will be held at Mecca Temple, New York City, February 21.

Richard W. Hogue, chairman of the Executive Committee for the Bronson Cutting Memorial Lectures, notifies us that the 1937 lectures will be held in Washington, D. C., during March of this year.

What's on the Air?

Financing and the building of homes will be the general topic of a new series of programs by the Federal Housing Administration to begin on Saturday, February 20, at 10 A.M., over the Columbia Broadcasting System network.

Senator Vandenberg of Michigan discusses "The President's Proposal on the Judiciary." Sunday, February 21, 6:30 to 7 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

Various speakers and sessions at the convention of the National Education Association at New Orleans will be broadcast as follows: Monday, February 22, 2 to 2:30 P.M., Dr. John W. Studebaker, NBC-Red Network; Monday, February 22, 6 to 6:15 P.M., round-table discussion led by Bess Goodykoontz, NBC-Red Network; Tuesday, February 23, 3:30 to 5 P.M., speeches and surveys, "A Year in Education" and "Convention Voices," CBS; Wednesday, February 24, 10:30 P.M., panel presentation of Educational Policies Commission, CBS; Thursday, February 25, 3:30 P.M., summary of the convention, CBS.

"Let Freedom Ring," first of a new series of programs by the Office of Education of the United States Department of the Interior depicting the struggle for civil liberties. Monday, February 22, 10:30 P.M., CBS.

Secretary of the Interior Ickes outlines President Roosevelt's conservation plans in a speech before the New York Rod and Gun Editors' Association. Tuesday, February 23, 10:30 to 11 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

America's Town Meeting of the Air takes up the subject, "How Should the Federal Government Be Reorganized?" Thursday, February 25, 9:30 to 10:30 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

All times given are Eastern Standard.

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Midwinter Book Section

The Oxford Boys Becalmed

I CONFESS to being rather disappointed by these last two books of W. H. Auden's.[1] It looks as if the group to which he belongs—the school of young Oxford poets which includes C. Day Lewis, Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice—had lapsed, after their first lift of enthusiasm for the clean sweep of society promised by communism, of repudiation of the world to which they belong, into a period of relaxation into vagueness, of cooling down and marking time.

W. H. Auden has presented the curious spectacle of a poet with an original language apparently in the most robust English tradition, whose development has seemed to be arrested at the mentality of an adolescent schoolboy. His technique has seemed to mature, but he himself has not grown up. His mind has always been haunted, as the minds of boys at prep school still are, by parents and uncles and aunts. His love poems seem ambiguous and unreal like the products of adolescent flirtations and prep-school homosexuality. His talk about "the enemy" and "their side" and "our side" and "spying" and "lying in ambush" sounds less like something conceivably to be connected with the psychology of an underground revolutionary movement than like the dissimulated resentments and snootiness of the schoolboy with advanced ideas going back to his family for the holidays. When this brilliant and engaging young student first came out so strongly for the class struggle it seemed a bold and exhilarating step; but then he simply remained under the roof of his nice family and in the classroom with his stuffy professors; and the seizure of power which he dreams of is an insurrection in the schoolroom by the students:

> I should like to see you make a beginning before I go, now, here. Draw up a list of rotters and slackers, of proscribed persons under headings like this. Committees for municipal or racial improvement—the headmaster. Disbelievers in the occult—the school chaplain. The bogusly cheerful—the games master—the really disgusted—the teacher of modern languages. All these have got to die without issue. Unless my memory fails me there's a stoke hole under the floor of this hall. The Black Hole we called it in my day. New boys were always put in it. Ah, I see I am right. Well look to it. Quick, guard that door. Stop that man. Good. Now boys hustle them, ready, steady—go.

With all this—and out of all proportion to the interest of what he has had to say—Auden's imagery and speech have had an energy, a felicity, a resource, a nerve, which have made him a conspicuous figure. He certainly has more of what it takes than anybody else of his generation in England or, as far as I can remember, in America. And in one department he is entirely successful: he has invented a new satire for the times. The most satisfactory part of his work seems to me such skits as "The Dance of Death," with its cheap and weary rhythms; the satiric-elegiac choruses of "The Dog Beneath the Skin"; and such poems as that in this new collection in which he describes the Cambridge intellectuals,

> Who show the poor by mathematics
> In their defense
> That wealth and poverty are merely
> Mental pictures, so that clearly
> Every tramp's a landlord really
> In mind-events.

He is especially good at calling the roll of the lonely, the neurotic, the futile—of all the queer kinds of individuals who make up the English upper middle class. No one else has given us just this sense, at once pathetic and insipid, of the slackening of the social body and the falling apart of its cells.

But once having taken this stand, once having put themselves on record, we get the impression that Auden and his associates are at a loss as to what to do next. In some ways they appear to be retrograding. Thus the language of Auden in this new book seems to me to be actually less personal than it was in his earlier poetry. He seemed in his earlier work to have revived the traditional language of English poetry at its most vigorous, its most lively and most free, telescoping the whole tradition from the emphatic alliteration of Anglo-Saxon through the variety and ease of the Elizabethans to the irony and bizarre imagination of the generation just before his own. But in "On This Island" it seems to me that the rhythms of the reflective and lyrical poems approach too close to the deliberate looseness of the satirical ones; and the off-rhymes begin to get on one's nerves. (Negligent rhythms and near rhymes, I suppose, are a symptom of blurred emotions. There are moments when Louis MacNeice sounds like a serious Ogden Nash.)

And it has come to be a depressing feature of the literary scene at the present time (noticeable also in this country) that writers who had hitherto seemed able to stand on their own feet have begun flopping over on one another and imitating one another's idiom—without there necessarily being any question of the normal attraction of the weaker toward the stronger. Thus Auden, whose voice we knew and liked, disconcerts us by suddenly falling into the accents of Housman or Yeats or the palest of the later Eliot. And thus MacNeice, who seems to me with Auden the most gifted of the Auden group, with a lyric impressionism quite different from the rest, appears in a recent number of New Verse to have toppled over upon Auden and to have become almost indistinguishable from him. (Louis MacNeice's book, by the way, ought to be brought out in America. His north-of-Ireland accent and material make him stand out from the Oxford lushness, and in his best moments he has a combination of intensity with felicity which makes much of the work of the school sound synthetic.)

And the second of the Auden and Isherwood plays, "The Ascent of F-6," is certainly very much inferior to "The Dog Beneath the Skin." "The Dog Beneath the Skin" had its shortcomings: a good deal of its satire was banal—it

[1] On This Island, by W. H. Auden. New York: Random House. 68 pages. $1.50.

The Ascent of F-6, by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood. New York: Random House (early March publication). $1.50.

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sounded as if the clever schoolboys had just discovered some of the stalest jokes of Marxism and worked them up for a school entertainment. But the first part, at any rate, was very funny; and the choruses, as I have said, were of Auden's best. "The Ascent of F-6" suffers even more from the flimsiness of amateur theatricals; and here Marxism itself has been forgotten for a relapse into Freudianism. The theme is a sort of psychoanalytic version of a career like that of Colonel Lawrence. It has the peculiarly exasperating defect of appearing to be padded in a tiresome way and yet at the same time to be too short and not to exploit the possibilities of the subject.

Not, however, that Auden and his group are any worse off than other Left intellectuals. And they have given expression to their plight and their time much more brilliantly and honestly than most. The combination of communism with homosexuality, of an England suburbanized and Americanized in the peculiarly dreary English way, with an English university culture as rich as the richest fruitcake, is something which has never before been seen in the history of English literature and which it took some courage and genius to get there. Besides, MacNeice and Auden are only thirty, Day Lewis thirty-two, Spender twenty-eight. They are remarkable at that age for having been able to say so well something which had not been said before at all:

So in this hour of crisis and dismay,
What better than your strict and adult pen
Can warn us from the colors and the consolations,
The showy arid works, reveal
The squalid shadow of academy and garden,
Make action urgent and its nature clear?
Who give us nearer insight to resist
The expanding fear, the savaging disaster?

This then my birthday wish for you, as now
From the narrow window of my fourth-floor room
I smoke into the night, and watch reflections
Stretch in the harbor. In the houses
The little pianos are closed, and a clock strikes.
And all sway forward on the dangerous flood
Of history, that never sleeps or dies,
And, held one moment, burns the hand.

EDMUND WILSON.

[I have just learned that Auden is driving an ambulance in Spain. There is a good little piece by him on Valencia in The New Statesman and Nation for January 30.—E.W.]

A Literary Calendar: 1911-30

THIS CALENDAR grew out of the Revaluations that have been appearing in The New Republic. In reading and editing that series, I could not help being impressed by the fashion in which events of a similar nature were grouped in our literary history. Everything seemed to happen in waves. Exciting years like those from 1912 to 1916, when the "young intellectuals" first appeared, and like 1919-1920, when they seized power in the literary world almost like the Bolsheviks in Russia, would be followed by others as dull as intellectual ditch-water. And the general mood prevailing in any year helps us to understand what a given author was really saying.

Included in the calendar are books that helped to determine the intellectual climate of their time, or that marked the appearance of important new writers. Also included are literary fashions and a few political events—strikes, trials, anti-Red campaigns—that were reflected in literature. I owe a debt to Frederick Lewis Allen for material taken from "Only Yesterday" and from his article, "Best Sellers: 1900-1935," in The Saturday Review. But I got many of the ideas from autobiographies like those of Lincoln Steffens, Mabel Dodge Luhan and Joseph Freeman, and most of the factual information from "Who's Who" and "The Columbia Encyclopedia"—which last, incidentally, I found to be damned careless about its dates.

1911

The Dreiser year. "Jenny Gerhardt," his second novel, is published and fought about. "Sister Carrie," suppressed by its first publisher in 1900, is now reissued; the younger writers are amazed and inspired by its courage. During the next four years, Dreiser will finish three more big novels.

The little-theatre movement is getting under way.

Alfred Stieglitz, the editor of Camera Work, is urging writers and painters to be bold in self-expression.

Lincoln Steffens tries to settle the McNamara case and has a lot of explaining to do.

The Masses is founded by Piet Vlag.

Best sellers for the year: "The Rosary," "The Winning of Barbara Worth."

1912

In a phrase made popular by Floyd Dell, this is "the lyric year." Books of verse—many of them first books—are published by Robinson Jeffers, Joyce Kilmer, William Ellery Leonard, Vachel Lindsay, Amy Lowell, John G. Neihardt, Ezra Pound, Sara Teasdale and a hundred others.

Poetry: A Magazine of Verse is founded in Chicago by Harriet Monroe, with Ezra Pound as the foreign editor.

Edna St. Vincent Millay's first ambitious poem, "Renascence," appears in another poetry magazine. Elinor Wylie has poems printed in London.

"The fiddles are tuning as it were all over America," says old Jack Yeats, the poet's father.

Politically this year is the high point of pre-war socialism, with Debs getting nearly a million votes.

The IWW invades the East and wins the Lawrence textile strike, with a poet, Arturo Giovannitti, as one of the two strike leaders.

Best sellers: "The Winning of Barbara Worth" again, and "Queed."

1913

The year of Mabel Dodge's salon, in Greenwich Village, and the year when The Smart Set, under Willard Huntington Wright, is printing the new Continental writers.

The Masses is reorganized, with Max Eastman as chief editor. Jack Reed, also of the editorial board, goes to jail for the Paterson silk strikers (IWW) and stages an impressive strike pageant in Madison Square Garden, but the strike is lost.

The Armory Show gives New York its first glimpse of the Cubist and Post-Impressionist painters: "Nude Descending a Staircase."

"O Pioneers!" by Willa Cather, her first important novel.

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"An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution," by Charles A. Beard.

"General William Booth Enters Heaven," by Vachel Lindsay.

"Sons and Lovers," by D. H. Lawrence.

"Looking back upon it now," says Mabel Dodge twenty years later, "it seems as though everywhere, in that year of 1913, barriers went down and people reached each other who had never been in touch before; there were all sorts of new ways to communicate, as well as new communications."

Best sellers: Winston Churchill's "The Inside of the Cup," and Eleanor H. Porter's "Pollyanna."

1914

The invasion of churches by the unemployed (New York City, February and March) and the Ludlow Massacre (Colorado, April 20) are widely discussed in the magazines—at least till war breaks out in Europe.

Sinclair Lewis publishes his first novel, "Our Mr. Wrenn."

The Little Review appears in Chicago.

The New Republic, edited by Herbert Croly, is "a journal of opinion which seeks to meet the challenge of a new time. . . . The final argument against cannon is ideas."

Best sellers: still "The Inside of the Cup" and "Pollyanna."

1915

A year of new poets and of quarrels over poetry, with Amy Lowell leading and dramatizing the fight against the conservatives of the American Poetry Society.

"North of Boston," by Robert Frost, and "Spoon River Anthology," by Edgar Lee Masters, are widely read and debated.

"Some Imagist Poets," the anthology edited by Miss Lowell, is bitterly debated but not read. "Tender Buttons," by Gertrude Stein, is the joke of the year.

Isadora Duncan comes back to New York and dances to the "Marseillaise."

"The 'Genius,' " by Theodore Dreiser.

"Of Human Bondage," by Somerset Maugham.

"The Harbor," by Ernest Poole, dealing with a strike on the New York waterfront.

Van Wyck Brooks sets the tone of the era in "America's Coming of Age."

Best sellers: "A Far Country," by Winston Churchill, and once again "Pollyanna."

1916

Greenwich Village is full of European artists escaping the War. Diaghilev's Russian Ballet makes its first American tour.

Freud is the new fashion: Mabel Dodge gets psychoanalyzed.

The Provincetown Players, now in their second season, produce a one-act play by Eugene O'Neill, "Bound East for Cardiff."

"The Man Against the Sky": Edwin Arlington Robinson is rescued from semi-obscurity.

Sherwood Anderson's first novel, "Windy McPherson's Son."

Carl Sandburg's "Chicago Poems."

"A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," by James Joyce.

Mooney and Billings are tried in San Francisco. Many radicals support Wilson in the fall elections because he kept us out of war.

Best sellers: "A Far Country" and Gene Stratton-Porter's "Michael O'Halloran."

1917

Movements like socialism, syndicalism, pacifism and women's rights, which had been spreading rapidly, are checked by the declaration of war and later by the Espionage Act. Many former Socialists and a few Wobblies become Four Minute Men. Others flee to Mexico or go to jail with Debs.

Jack Reed reports the Russian revolution.

The Masses is prosecuted and finally suppressed (though it will afterwards reappear as The Liberator).

The Seven Arts, best of the new literary magazines, dies as a result of expressing sentiments painful to its lady angel, who is patriotic.

Dos Passos, Cummings, Bromfield, Hemingway and other writers of the next decade are in the ambulance service.

Edna St. Vincent Millay and T. S. Eliot publish their first books.

Joseph Hergesheimer succeeds with "The Three Black Pennys."

Best sellers: "Mr. Britling Sees It Through"; "When a Man's a Man," by Harold Bell Wright.

1918

The editors of The Masses are twice brought to trial under the Espionage Act. Art Young sleeps through the second trial. Both juries disagree.

Everybody gets drunk on the day of the false armistice.

After being cut dead by his friends and hounded by secret-service agents, Randolph Bourne dies in the influenza epidemic.

The Modern Library is founded as a cheap reprint series of books appealing to the new generation. "The Picture of Dorian Gray" is its first choice, quite naturally.

"The Education of Henry Adams."

Lytton Strachey's "Eminent Victorians" foreshadows a new school of biography.

Best sellers: "Dere Mable" and Gene Stratton-Porter's "Daughter of the Land."

1919

The year of the great hope and the great disillusionment. In the spring, people are dreaming of an American workers' democracy in a world at peace.

Strikes, most of them disastrous. The Seattle general strike in January, the Boston police strike in September, the coal strike killed by injunction, the great steel strike dying all through the fall.

After Versailles, the Wilson administration goes to pieces and its supporters retire into apathy or the arts.

The Red scare and the Palmer raids. Sergeant Arthur Guy Empey says, "My motto for the Reds is SOS—ship or shoot." The liberals whisper behind locked doors.

It is still permitted to revolt against stupidity and moral snoopers. Mencken brings out his "Prejudices: First Series." James Branch Cabell's "Jurgen," suppressed and then reissued, becomes a popular success.

"Bonds of Interest," by Jacinto Benavente, is the first production of the Theatre Guild.

Thorstein Veblen is writing for The Dial.

"Winesburg, Ohio," by Sherwood Anderson.

"Our America," by Waldo Frank.

"Ten Days That Shook the World," by John Reed.

The desire to get away from it all, to escape into art or

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the South Seas: all the middle-highbrows are reading "The Moon and Sixpence," by Somerset Maugham.

Best sellers: "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," "The Arrow of Gold."

1920

The year when the new generation of 1912-1915, having abandoned or turned against its socialist hopes, moves forward to the seizure of literary power. "Main Street," by Sinclair Lewis, is the first genuinely popular novel to embody its moral revolt against conventions.

Other books of the year that attack the genteel tradition and get favorable reviews are "Moon-Calf," by Floyd Dell, "The American Credo," by Nathan and Mencken, and "Painted Veils," by James Gibbons Huneker, the old critic's only novel.

"Beyond the Horizon," Eugene O'Neill's first full-length play, is liked on Broadway and gets the Pulitzer Prize.

"This Side of Paradise," by Scott Fitzgerald, just out of Princeton, reveals the existence of a still younger generation that takes what it wants without bothering to stage a rebellion.

Two rich young men from Harvard buy The Dial. It dies as a political fortnightly and is reborn as an esthetic monthly.

The Palmer raids continue into the spring, after reaching their height in January. All the Socialist assemblymen are expelled from the New York State Legislature. But the heresy hunters go too far: even Charles Evans Hughes rebukes them.

Wells's "Outline of History" appears in November.

Best-selling novel: "The Man of the Forest," by Zane Grey. Non-fiction: "Now It Can Be Told" and "The Economic Consequences of the Peace," both signs of disillusionment.

1921

Beginning the era of flaming youth, of short skirts and long kisses and the hip-pocket flask. Beginning also the vogue of the jazz-age novels, most of which are written to titivate the older generation. The flappers themselves read Edna Millay's poetry—"A Few Figs from Thistles," published the year before, and her new book, "Second April."

The Aldous Huxley craze starts quietly, with "Crome Yellow."

"Erik Dorn," by Ben Hecht, the bad boy of Chicago.

"Three Soldiers," by John Dos Passos.

"So long, baby, I'll meet you in Paris." All the kids are going abroad "to write one honest novel in an atmosphere free from Puritan inhibitions."

Magazines are being founded in Europe for the expatriates: Gargoyle in Paris and Broom in Rome.

Best-selling novels: "Main Street" and "The Sheik." Non-fiction: "The Outline of History" and "White Shadows of the South Seas."

1922

An unexciting year, except for its literary importations. James Joyce's "Ulysses" is published in Paris. Expatriates home for a visit succeed in slipping a few dozen copies past customs officials on the outlook for pornography.

The Proust vogue begins: "Swann's Way" is translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff.

"The Waste Land," by Eliot, is printed in The Dial.

"Civilization in the United States: An Inquiry by Thirty Americans" is more like an inquest over the corpse of a man whom everybody disliked.

"Babbitt," by Sinclair Lewis—his best novel.

"The Enormous Room," by E. E. Cummings.

"Peter Whiffle," by Carl Van Vechten.

The Dada year in Paris. Secession is printed in Vienna, at a cost of $30 per issue. Broom moves to Berlin, where the exchange is still more favorable.

Best-selling novels: "If Winter Comes," "The Sheik." Non-fiction: still "The Outline of History."

1923

"A Lost Lady," by Willa Cather.

"Antic Hay," by Aldous Huxley.

"Jennifer Lorn," by Elinor Wylie—"At last a civilized American novel," Sinclair Lewis cables from England.

"Yes, We Have No Bananas."

Vol. I, No. 1 of The American Mercury (dated January, 1924) appears in December. Great commotion over Ernest Boyd's article, "Esthete: Model 1924."

Best sellers: fiction, "Black Oxen"; non-fiction, Emily Post's "Book of Etiquette."

1924

Broom dies in Greenwich Village: the Dada movement can't learn to talk United States.

A. E. Orage comes to New York and spreads the Gurdjieff craze among the tired liberals.

The Saturday Review is the first independent weekly devoted solely to books.

"Tamar and Other Poems," by Robinson Jeffers.

"The Green Hat," by Michael Arlen.

"A Story Teller's Story," by Sherwood Anderson.

Burton Rascoe, friend of the anti-genteel writers, loses his job as editor of The Herald Tribune Books and is replaced by Stuart Pratt Sherman, the academic Humanist. But Sherman soon goes over to the enemy and begins finding merit in the books that Rascoe had been praising.

Best sellers: "So Big"; "Diet and Health, with a Key to the Calories" (women are getting thinner).

1925

"An American Tragedy," by Theodore Dreiser.

"The Great Gatsby," by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

"In Our Time," Ernest Hemingway's first and in some ways his best collection of short stories, has a sale of less than a thousand copies.

"Manhattan Transfer," by John Dos Passos—"More important in every way," Sinclair Lewis says, "than anything by Gertrude Stein or Marcel Proust or even that great white boar, Mr. Joyce's 'Ulysses.'"

The New Yorker is founded—"not for the old lady from Dubuque."

Writers are buying farms in Connecticut.

The monkey trial in Dayton, Tennessee.

Best sellers: fiction, "Soundings"; non-fiction: "The Man Nobody Knows."

1926

In April the Book of the Month Club announces its first choice: "Lolly Willowes," by Sylvia Townsend Warner.

The New Masses takes the place of The Liberator, now defunct.

"Nigger Heaven," by Carl Van Vechten: Greenwich Village is moving uptown to Harlem.

"Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," by Anita Loos.

"The Cabala," by Thornton Wilder.

"The Time of Man," by Elizabeth Madox Roberts.

"White Buildings," the first book by Hart Crane.

"The Sun Also Rises," by Ernest Hemingway, starts a new school of hard-crusted sentiment, soft inside.

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The name of this organization is Consumers Union of United States, Inc. Formed on a strictly non-profit, membership basis under the laws of New York State, the purpose of this organization is to serve its members in the capacity of a consumers' testing laboratory by providing them with accurate and unbiased technical information about their everyday purchases. Close to 30,000 consumers throughout the United States are now members of Consumers Union.

To them every month goes *Consumers Union Reports*, a compact magazine, provocatively illustrated, written in straightforward language, and describing and rating tested products *by brand names* as "Best Buys," "Also Acceptable," or "Not Acceptable." Competent, *unbiased* technicians, either on the staff of Consumers Union or employed as consultants, working in university and other laboratories, make the analyses and determine the ratings by means of laboratory and other standard tests, the results of which are painstakingly checked and verified. Products reported on include most of the merchandise you have occasion to buy from day to day: shoes, toothpaste, radios, foods, drugs, cosmetics, vacuum cleaners, soaps, liquors, clothing, tires, oils, and many things besides. Notes are also included in the *Reports* on the labor conditions under which many of the products are manufactured, these notes, however, being entirely independent of the technical recommendations.

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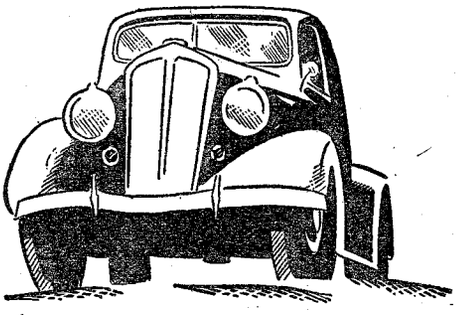
To become a member of Consumers Union, mail the application form below. Your membership will begin either with the forthcoming March issue or with any previous issue you may indicate. Listings of the principal subjects covered in past issues are given in the coupon below. (Note *Consumers Union Reports* is not sold on newsstands and is available only through membership, subscription, or at the office of Consumers Union, 55 Vandam Street, New York.)

Ratings of 1937 Cars

Divided into three price classifications under $1,000, over twenty-five leading models of 1937 automobiles are rated in the forthcoming March issue of *Consumers Union Reports* (ready for mailing about February 25). Some of them are rated as "Best Buys," some as "Not Acceptable," and others as "Also Acceptable" in the estimated order of their merit. Based on such factors as economy, comparative safety of operation, general performance and other engineering features, these ratings were made by competent automotive engineers after thorough examinations and actual performance tests. Such features as hypoid gears, automatic choke, frame durability, driver-visibility, and others are discussed at length. Tables on comparative gas consumption are also given. This report—which should be read by everyone contemplating the purchase of a new car—will be followed in an early issue by ratings of cars in higher-priced groups. Previous issues of the REPORTS (still available) have analyzed and rated tires, gasolines, motor oils, and anti-freeze solutions.

Also discussed in the March issue are the following products: RADIO SETS, FLOUR, SHEETS, CAN OPENERS, BAKED BEANS, CANNED ASPARAGUS AND CHERRIES.



SOME OF THE CARS RATED IN THIS ISSUE

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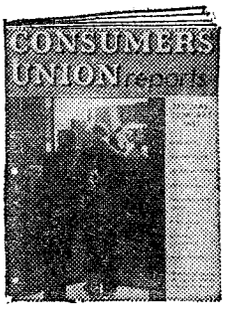

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All the highbrows are fighting about, and some are reading, Spengler's "Decline of the West," which has just been translated.

Sinclair Lewis declines the Pulitzer Prize for "Arrowsmith."

Best sellers: fiction, "The Private Life of Helen of Troy"; non-fiction, once more "The Man Nobody Knows."

1927

The year of the big bass drum. Peaches Browning, Ruth Snyder and poor Judd Gray. Five million words are telegraphed from the courtroom during the Hall-Mills trial. Eighteen hundred tons of assorted wastepaper are showered down on the Lindbergh parade.

"The Rise of American Civilization," by Charles A. and Mary R. Beard.

In March the Literary Guild announces its first choice: "Anthony Comstock," a biography and a labor of hate, by Heywood Broun and Margaret Leech.

The American Mercury reaches its peak with a circulation of 77,000.

Transition is founded in Paris; The Hound and Horn appears in Cambridge, Mass.

The first "American Caravan," edited by Alfred Kreymborg, Paul Rosenfeld and Lewis Mumford, collects the new writers into one big volume.

"The Magic Mountain," by Thomas Mann, comes out in English.

In May and June the Chinese revolution fails, with the result that the Communist International shifts its world policy. Trotsky is arrested in November, after attempting a demonstration in Moscow.

On the night of August 22-23, Sacco and Vanzetti are executed in Charlestown Prison. The tired liberals who had tried to save them relapse once more into discouragement.

Best sellers: "Elmer Gantry," "The Story of Philosophy."

1928

A dullish year except in Wall Street and Detroit. But perhaps it marks the climax of instalment buying and high-pressure salesmanship—and also of the revolt against them by the highbrows.

The vogue of the debunking biographies continues.

"Boston," a two-volume novel by Upton Sinclair, deals with the Sacco-Vanzetti case.

"Point Counter Point," by Aldous Huxley, is compulsory reading.

Mae West appears in "Diamond Lil."

"Have you seen 'Strange Interlude'? Do you think it's as wonderful as people say?"

Publishers are prosperous and are making big advances to their authors, who promptly sail for Europe—like everybody else. During the year, 437,000 people leave the country. There is a building boom on the Riviera.

Best sellers: fiction, "The Bridge of San Luis Rey"; non-fiction, "Disraeli."

1929

A year of endings and of new beginnings.

In "The Modern Temper," Joseph Wood Krutch proves that the moral revolt of his contemporaries leads finally to disillusionment. In "Middletown," the Lynds and their staff of investigators prove by the best scientific methods that Sinclair Lewis was right when he wrote "Babbitt."

The Westchester set is reading "Ex-Wife," of which the moral is that when young wives are unfaithful they shouldn't tell their husbands.

New writers are promoted to genius: William Faulkner ("The Sound and the Fury"), Thomas Wolfe ("Look Homeward, Angel").

The Gastonia strike begins in April. Eventually it will be the subject of at least six proletarian novels and two plays.

Transition prints the Manifesto of the Word. Harry Crosby signs it.

The Dial ceases publication with the July issue.

Men of letters, too, are dabbling in the stock market and getting their fingers burned.

The Humanists bring out a symposium proving, among other things, that there are no good American writers except maybe Dorothy Canfield.

Harry Crosby commits suicide.

Skirts suddenly get longer, bringing back the atmosphere of 1919.

Best sellers: fiction, "All Quiet on the Western Front"; non-fiction, "The Art of Thinking."

1930

A year of skepticism about American business and of curiosity about Russia, especially the Five Year Plan.

"The Critique of Humanism" shows a reviving interest in social criticism. Michael Gold cracks down on Thornton Wilder.

"Jews Without Money," by Michael Gold.

"The Woman of Andros," by Thornton Wilder.

"The Bridge," by Hart Crane.

"The 42nd Parallel," by John Dos Passos—the first volume of a trilogy that would be completed in 1936 with "The Big Money."

Sinclair Lewis gets the Nobel Prize and delivers a famous oration.

The last day of 1930 is the maddest and wildest of all the prohibition New Year's Eves.

Best sellers: fiction, "Cimarron"; non-fiction, "The Story of San Michele."

A Note in Conclusion

Looking back on this record, I get the impression that most of the years from 1921 to 1928 were dull years intellectually. The scene was dominated by the writers who had come forward between 1911 and 1916, the writers in revolt against the genteel tradition. They now had their own publishing houses, and good ones too—Knopf, Liveright, Harcourt; they had their own magazines like The American Mercury and even their play-producing groups, like the Theatre Guild and the Provincetown Players. They set the literary standards. But having won their revolt, they lost much of their fire and combativeness, and certainly they did not write many of the masterpieces that were expected of them. It was not until 1929 and 1930 that literary history once more became eventful.

I have not carried the record beyond these years, because it is much harder to choose the significant events of yesterday. But the truth is that most of the tendencies discussed in 1937—proletarian fiction, Marxian criticism, the revulsion against moral laxness and the search for new values—were foreshadowed in the events of 1929. The only important tendency to appear later was the autobiographical tendency announced by Lincoln Steffens' book in 1931. People who had gone through the War and the boom—and had visited Russia—felt that they had lived in three worlds, and they wanted to revalue their past before it was too late. Perhaps this Calendar, and the whole series of Revaluations, are the results of that tendency.

Malcolm Cowley.

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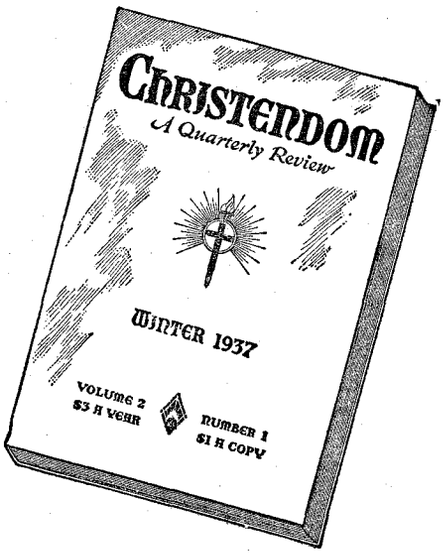

SEEKING READERS WHO ARE THOUGHTFUL (BUT NOT TOO THOUGHTFUL), LEARNED (BUT NOT TOO LEARNED), SERIOUS (BUT NOT TOO SERIOUS), AND WHO ARE NOT ASHAMED OF THEIR FEELING THAT, THE SITUATION BEING AS IT IS, SOMETHING OUGHT TO BE DONE ABOUT IT!

CHRISTENDOM

A Quarterly Review

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*
JOHN KNOX, *Managing Editor*

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The Restoration of Christendom — *The Archbishop of York*
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Western Society at the Crossroads — *Arthur E. Holt*
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Check List of Midwinter Books

BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS

AARON BURR: THE PROUD PRETENDER, by Holmes Alexander (Harpers, $3.50). The life of a man who played for high stakes, told without apologies for his lack of scruples.

LETTERS OF FANNY BRAWNE TO FANNY KEATS: 1820-24, edited by Fred Edgcumbe (Oxford, $3). Thirty-one newly published letters written after the death of Keats by the woman he loved.

GOLDEN FLEECE: THE STORY OF FRANZ JOSEPH AND ELISABETH OF AUSTRIA, by Bertita Harding (Bobbs-Merrill, $3.50). The personal and political life of the last of the Hapsburgs.

PARNELL: A BIOGRAPHY, by Joan Haslip (Stokes, $3). A factual and psychological study of the Protestant landlord who came to represent the interests of the Irish Catholic tenants.

LET ME LIVE, by Angelo Herndon (Random House, $2.50). The autobiography of a twenty-three-year-old Negro whose trial for "insurrection" has become a national issue.

SOMETHING OF MYSELF, by Rudyard Kipling (Doubleday, Doran, $2.50). His autobiography.

WAR MEMOIRS OF DAVID LLOYD GEORGE (Little, Brown, Vol. V, $3). This final volume covers the campaigns on the western front through the fall of 1918 and the Armistice.

A LONG WAY FROM HOME, by Claude McKay (Lee Furman, $3). The autobiography of a Negro poet.

THE LIFE OF RICHARD WAGNER, by Ernest Newman (Knopf, $5). A second volume, covering the years between 1848 and 1851.

ARMY WITHOUT BANNERS: THE ADVENTURES OF AN IRISH VOLUNTEER, by Ernie O'Malley (Houghton Mifflin, $3.50). A leader of the Irish Republican Army tells of three adventurous years spent fighting the Black and Tans. Required reading.

TOM PAINE, by Hesketh Pearson (Harpers, $3.50). A new life of the author of "The Rights of Man," whose bicentenary was observed this year.

EDGAR ALLAN POE, by Edward Shanks (Macmillan, $3). A critical biography by an English poet and novelist.

PUSHKIN, by Ernest J. Simmons (Harvard U., $4). A long and scholarly study of the great Russian poet.

LOOK THROUGH THE BARS, by Ernst Toller (Farrar and Rinehart, $2.75). The poet's years in prison, after taking part in the Munich revolution.

THE FINAL STRUGGLE: COUNTESS TOLSTOY'S DIARY FOR 1910 (Oxford, $2.50). The unhappy record of a commonplace woman condemned to be the wife of a genius.

FICTION

THE BRIDAL CANOPY, by S. J. Agnon (Doubleday, Doran, $3). "Being the wonders that befell the Hassid Reb Yudel of Brod and his three gentle daughters."

THE LAURELS ARE CUT DOWN, by Archie Binns (Reynal and Hitchcock, $2.50). Peace and war on the West Coast; two brothers in Siberia with the American army of occupation.

THE INVADERS, by Stuart David Engstrand (Knopf, $2.50). A story of Southwestern tenant farmers by a vigorous new writer.

NONE SHALL LOOK BACK, by Caroline Gordon (Scribner's, $2.75). A big Civil War novel; Kentuckians and a Georgian in Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry.

THE QUIET SHORE, by Walter Havighurst (Macmillan, $2.50). An Ohio family divided by the feud between city and country.

JORDANSTOWN, by Josephine Johnson (Simon and Schuster, $2.50). A race and labor tragedy in a small town, by the author of "Now in November."

NIGHTS OF AN OLD CHILD, by Heinz Liepmann (Lippincott, $2.50). An autobiographical story of post-war Germany, by one of the best of the exiled novelists.

EL INDIO, by Gregorio Lopez y Fuentes (Bobbs-Merrill, $2.50). The story of a primitive village high in the Sierra, beautifully illustrated by Diego Rivera.

LORDS AND MASTERS, by A. G. Macdonell (Macmillan, $2.50). A satire on the British upper classes.

THIS IS YOUR DAY, by Edward Newhouse (Lee Furman, $2.50). The adventures of a Communist organizer, told without propaganda.

OF MICE AND MEN, by John Steinbeck (Covici, Friede, $2). The tragedy of two itinerant harvest hands whose lives are given nourishment by their dream of owning a fabulous rabbit ranch.

INVASION, by Maxence van der Meersch (Viking, $3). A French community behind the German lines; four years of meanness and heroism and suffering.

THE CROQUET PLAYER, by H. G. Wells (Viking, $1.25). A ghost story and a parable of the world on the edge of war.

ANNA BECKER, by Max White (Stackpole, $2.50). The story of a New England "woman who did."

ART, DRAMA, CRITICISM

THE SILENT PARTNER, by Clifford Odets (Random House, $2). A play about a strike.

ART AND SOCIETY, by Herbert Read (Macmillan, $4). A survey of art from its prehistoric beginnings that seeks to establish the relationship of art to society as a whole.

PORTRAIT OF MEXICO, by Diego Rivera and Bertram D. Wolfe (Covici, Friede, $4.75). Mexico as interpreted by the famous painter; 240 reproductions of his work with explanatory text.

I WILL NOT REST, by Romain Rolland (Liveright, $2.25). Collected essays dealing with the varied issues of our time—war, peace, fascism, communism and imperialism.

GENERAL

COÖPERATIVE ENTERPRISE, by Jacob Baker (Vanguard, $2). The origin, growth and achievements of coöperatives in ten European countries.

AMERICAN HURLY-BURLY, by Ernest Sutherland Bates and Alan Williams (McBride, $3.50). A book of comments on everything that happened in 1936.

FROM BRYAN TO STALIN, by William Z. Foster (International, $3). A partly autobiographical account of the left-wing labor movement.

THE HUNDRED YEARS, by Philip Guedalla (Doubleday, Doran, $3). A biography of the Western world from the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837.

AN ATLAS OF EMPIRE, by J. F. Horrabin (Knopf, $1.50). What parts of the world are owned by whom, how control was seized and what the various possessions are worth.

BEHIND THE SPANISH BARRICADES, by John Langdon-Davies (McBride, $2.75). An impassioned book by an Englishman who knows Spain and sympathizes with the loyalists.

THE NILE, by Emil Ludwig (Viking, $5). Geography and history and travelogue combined into "the life story of a river."

VIEWED WITHOUT ALARM: EUROPE TODAY, by Walter Millis (Houghton Mifflin, $1.25). Why the author of "The Road to War" thinks our fears of an early world conflict may be exaggerated.

TSUSHIMA, by A. Novikoff-Priboy (Knopf, $3.50). The naval battle between the Japanese and Russians in 1905, recounted vividly by one of the few survivors.

THE HUMAN COMEDY, by James Harvey Robinson (Harpers, $3). The lag between social thinking and productive possibilities, or "Why We Don't Have Utopia"; a posthumous work by the author of "The Mind in the Making."

DON GYPSY, by Walter Starkie (Dutton, $3.50). Adventures with a fiddle in Spanish Morocco and southern Spain.

JAPAN'S FEET OF CLAY, by Freda Utley (Norton, $3.75). An analysis of Japan's economic weaknesses with particular reference to her dreams of empire.

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Hopping on the Court

The Ultimate Power, by Morris L. Ernst. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 349 pages. $3.

THE POINT is not that President Roosevelt's proposal has, in a sense, made obsolete practically the whole current crop of Constitution-Supreme Court books. The point is that it need not have made any of them obsolete. For the chief virtue of the President's proposal, even granting the cleverness of its long-range phrasing, lies in the immediacy of its impact. The essential problem remains. Young judges can still be just as reactionary as old judges, and there is still room, as there has long been room, for intelligent discussion of the Supreme Court issue, directed toward advocacy of permanent, thoroughgoing reform.

Yet Professor Corwin, for instance, pointed his scholarly analyses of constitutional concepts toward a plea for political thumb-twiddling plus a prayer that the present Court would change its constitutional mind; and that wishy-washy conclusion makes the good Professor's stuff sound slightly silly today. Irving Brant, to take another example, aimed his "Storm over the Constitution" toward the pious hope that the people would learn to elect better Presidents who would appoint better Justices; and that anti-climactic letdown subtracts much of its present value from what is still, nevertheless, the ablest book on the subject. And now even the forthright Morris Ernst, because he also tried at the finish to sail a bit too close to the wind of political expediency, finds most of it taken out of his sails by an equally forthright President who is, politically at least, a better sailor.

I suppose I shall be accused of something like liberal *lèse majesté* when I say that I do not think Mr. Ernst's "The Ultimate Power" is a very good book. Unquestionably it is the work of a brilliant and encyclopedic mind. But it is a sloppy, slap-dash, Miss-Mince-please-take-another-paragraph affair, with the brilliant mind hopping around flea-fashion from one section of the encyclopedia to another and leaving the reader gasping for breath and continuity. Mr. Ernst hops from a collection of facts and incidents indubitably proving that life in eighteenth-century America was very different from life in twentieth-century America, to a sketchy and occasionally distorted-to-make-a-point account of the Constitutional Convention, then through a confused and confusing record of the Supreme Court's gradual assumption of legislative power, on up to the grand finale in which Mr. Ernst proposes his own constitutional amendment as a cure for our judicial ills. Mr. Ernst does not even hop in a straight line. He hops back and forth and back and forth, interspersing, as he goes, frequent hops to the side, to explore, perhaps, the etymology of "turnpike" or "tenterhooks," or maybe merely to thumb his nose at the legal profession.

This is not to suggest that I do not agree with most of what I take to be Mr. Ernst's views, from his notion that "interstate commerce" was intended to mean a great deal more than the Court has let it mean, right down to his contempt for the lawyers and The Law. I do. But I cannot see that Mr. Ernst has brought forth new facts or arguments of any importance, I cannot see that he has presented his old material in anything like effective fashion, and, so far as sheer readability goes, I cannot see any fun in trying to follow a man whose style resembles a pogo-stick in full flight.

Presumably, though, Mr. Ernst will be judged not by the bulk of his book but by the solution he suggests at its

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close. That solution, borrowed, as he says, from James Madison, is to let Congress, by a two-thirds vote, overrule the Supreme Court's constitutional decisions just as Congress today can overrule the President's veto. But why not go the whole hog, Mr. Ernst? As you yourself say, discarding other proposals, "if we are going through the effort and stir of an amendment, why not seek a more direct and enduring approach to the problem?" Why clutter the processes of government with one more of those overtouted "checks and balances" which serve only to thwart or delay the march of democracy? Can you name a single past decision in which the Supreme Court has defended, against *congressional* encroachment, the personal liberties of a powerless minority instead of the property interests of a powerful minority? If not—and you know that there have been opportunities—where is there in your philosophy, or in mine, a place for *any* judicial check against national majority action? Practically speaking, is not the Constitution, and is not personal liberty, as safe in the hands of Congress as in those of the Court? Why not, in short, abolish the Supreme Court's power to declare acts of Congress unconstitutional?

It seems to me that Mr. Ernst's error lies in trying to swallow in one mouthful both recovery and reform. He wanted to propose a permanent solution with some chance of speedy political adoption. Now President Roosevelt has taken the immediate play away from Mr. Ernst and the rest of the liberals, with a far more workable scheme which is, nevertheless, essentially an emergency measure. The point is that the Roosevelt plan leaves the field still wide open for those of us who would like to dig deeper and build more solidly—those of us who, like Mr. Ernst, want really and effectively to return "the ultimate power" to the people themselves.

FRED RODELL.

Eternal Feminine

Beloved Friend, by Catherine Drinker Bowen and Barbara von Meck. New York: Random House. 485 pages. $3.

AN EMBODIMENT of the hitherto only partially revealed correspondence of Tchaikowsky and Nadejda von Meck, this very entertaining book will scarcely challenge the taste of those readers who, because of its ultra-Byronism, egoistic and demoralized spirit, overemphases and debaucheries of feeling, dislike a deal of the composer's music. It will, however, move them to compassion for Tchaikowsky. In recounting the comi-tragic history of the "friendship" temporarily uniting the two extraordinary and unfortunate persons, the composer and his wealthy patroness, the volume's authors have bared the homosexual root of the world-weariness, self-pity and other Byronic humors represented by his larger compositions; and, *tout comprendre* as ever is *tout pardonner.*

Simultaneously—and this is its prime value—the book exhibits another important truth: through its novel, subtle matter, it redisplays the never sufficiently underscored fact of the centrality of the sexual distinction in the human creature, the inevitability of that distinction's proud self-assertion, and his consequent deep resentment of all those who cannot or will not recognize and cherish it.

The human creature in this case, Nadejda von Meck, was a shy recluse; the widow of a Muscovite railway-magnate whose estate she had helped establish; mother of twelve children, who envied the fishes their method of procreation; a romantic, fearful of human beings, whose pet-

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tinesses she knew, and somewhat given to humorless self-dramatizations. And a Russian, she shared her nation's barbaric generosity and its reverence for its great men and artists; and she was a passionate amateur of music. Introduced to Tchaikowsky's work by Nicholas Rubinstein in 1876, and enthralled by the morbid, gorgeous, physical stuff, she readily took upon herself the business of protecting the composer—her junior by five years—on the condition that he make no effort to see her. At first she was satisfied by a very full epistolary communication with her brilliant protegé, and with the role of maternal guardian who placed him on a pedestal in her mind, supported and consoled him from afar, and for herself asked nothing besides the realization of his original ideas. (She was indeed the "mother" he required, giving him the emotional as well as the material security necessary to his work.) Then, one day some time after the dissolution of Tchaikowsky's pitiful marriage, and in ignorance of his veritable propensities, she wrote him asking whether he had ever been in love, whether his passion for music excluded love of a woman? Tchaikowsky evaded the reply; dedicated his Fourth Symphony to her as "his best friend." Shortly after, she invited him to live near her in Florence, and furnished an apartment for him there. Then she invited him to her estate in the Ukraine: one afternoon, their carriages met. Tchaikowsky apologized for the accident. And—it was three years since the inception of their "beloved friendship"—Nadejda wrote him that she had a confession to make. It was to the effect that she loved him; that she had suffered intolerably at the time of his marriage: indirectly she begged his promise that no other woman should ever come between them.

And poor Tchaikowsky not only was not moved to a fiery response. He was not even moved to inquire whether the conditions she had originally made might not be modified. In fact, he did aggressively—nothing. He wrote a letter, very sincere, all sweetness and light. Her love-letters ceased. For ten years they continued their correspondence, she to protect him and sponsor his music. During that time, she made the acquaintance of another composer, a promising young pupil of Massenet's who acted as her house-musician and whom she nicknamed Bussyk. His actual name was Claude Debussy. At first she thought him cold: then, delightedly she discovered the goodness and warmth under the classic French exterior. One day she sent him packing back to Paris. Bussyk had asked the hand of one of her daughters.—At last, her eldest, favorite son fell mortally ill. A dreadful feeling of guilt suffused the unhappy woman, at that time in her fifty-fifth year: through it, she thought to perceive the truth that for the last thirteen years she had given this stranger, Tchaikowsky, a love which should have gone to her own son. She wrote the composer that she was no longer able to pay his pension, alleging a purely fictitious poverty. He replied that the pension no longer was necessary, but that her sympathy was. She had saved him: without her he would surely have gone mad and perished, etc. His letter was returned. He demanded an explanation: she had one of her sons-in-law reply that she was indisposed. And, crushed, poor Tchaikowsky saw himself, at the very height of his fame, as "pauper to a princess, a shabby musician who had been kept by a rich woman"; refused relationship on terms of equality. He said "My faith in people, all my trust in the world is turned upside down."

Both lived four years longer. During them, Nadejda was the victim of "a terrible nervous affliction"; and Tchaikowsky composed the dolorous "Symphonie Pathétique." On his death-bed, he kept repeating her name.

PAUL ROSENFELD.

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The Last Crusader

Lawrence: The Last Crusade, by Selden Rodman. New York: The Viking Press. 150 pages. $2.50.

SELDEN RODMAN, putting the story of T. E. Lawrence into a book-length poem, is writing in contemporary enlivened blank verse the alluring and equivocal myth of the intellectual man of action. He has taken the man who drew willful and literary mystery over himself, trailing clouds of envy among people satisfied with neither thought nor direct physical action, and divided his life into three parts: The Lamp, with Lawrence the archeologist, in Carchemish, 1913; The Sword, whose story is Lawrence of Arabia; The Wheel, continuing from Versailles through the career and death of Aircraftsman Shaw. In an unwinding selection of events (this poetry borrows its dramatic technique from the theatre rather than from the movies) Selden Rodman spotlights his man. The worth and drawback of the book are here: built definitely about a hero whose subtleties were among his most attractive attributes, it often neglects these to supply the apt pictorial explanations which are used to solve social and individual motives. "Lawrence: The Last Crusade," is full of energy and action, packed hard into athletic blank verse, disciplined and constrained by the necessity for continual motion. Subtleties are occasionally passed over for the sake of external speed, and some of the legendary quality of the figure is forfeited in the struggle to keep him explicable, and in his place in the line of history; but if he loses glamor in analysis, he does remain throughout the romantic hero: the political, introverted, refined soldier whose career has seized so many imaginations.

The blank verse is rapid, irregular enough to suit all its purposes, varied to continue interest. It has specific insensitivities. Poetry is lost when everything else is paid to action. Descriptions of sound are poor. The book reaches its top level of precision and clarity in the many technical and descriptive passages.

This excerpt from the last section illustrates almost all the qualities of Selden Rodman's poetry:

> So in the conquest of our element, air,
> The men who make the deadlines with their flights
> From dawn to dawn, must dare, but they must fade
> Before what countless loving hands prepare
> Nameless perfection, the mechanic's might!
>
> *Then he is happy?*
>
> He sees but cannot take.
> The head will not surrender to the heart.
> Yet he is happier. Despising arms,
> His refuge and security must start
> With common property and common work.
> If he could find the same in civil life
> He would be elsewhere; here is his freedom; here
> No wrath can enter, no demand, nor strife.

The clear purpose is here, the interest in contemporary instruments, machines, definitions, social weapons, choice prejudiced by nothing except reason, the definitions; and the romantic and heavily didactic close. The section follows a masterly description of the Versailles Conference which includes tours-de-force in descriptions of Wilson, Clemenceau, and flashes of Venizelos, Orlando and Lawrence himself; and foreshadows interviews with partisan committees in the English General Strike, and a fictionized conversation during which General Balbo challenges Lawrence that *he* is the man to lead Fascist England,

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Lawrence answers in a scene that demonstrates both the flimsiness of his political flooring and Selden Rodman's strength in using available data. The Lawrence documents have been used throughout, as is noted, except for the invented conversations—by far the weakest material in the book. Most of the flat passages are during conversation and soliloquy; the loose general and romantic words are found here, and more padding than in any of the straight sections, so that the dialogue is on another level from the body of the book.

Selden Rodman brings to the writing of this book a background that has included the co-foundership of the adventurous Harkness Hoot at Yale; a book of poems, "Mortal Triumph"; and the editorship of Common Sense. "Lawrence: The Last Crusade" answers a demand for narrative, for direct, suggestive and modern action-poetry. In giving us this poem, Selden Rodman has vitalized a life with muscular blank verse, brilliant scenes, dominant characters; he has thrown campaign-maps, archeologists' charts, the green tables of diplomats, airports, ambushes, death by gun and bomb, conspiracy or motorcycle, into quick relief. Using the data of contemporary history and poetry, he reënergizes narrative blank verse and T. E. Lawrence.

MURIEL RUKEYSER.

Child of Sorrow

Low Company, by Daniel Fuchs. New York: The Vanguard Press. $2.50.

WITH THE publication of "Low Company," Daniel Fuchs, author of "Summer in Williamsburg" and "Homage to Blenholt," comes of age. But it is a strange kind of age, mature, queerly powerful, disturbing. Those readers who regard Fuchs as a satirical comedian or as a humorous writer are casual readers. Daniel Fuchs is a man with a heavy burden. He has a burden almost as heavy as Dostoevsky. I do not envy him.

Briefly, "Low Company" is a novel about a section of Brooklyn which Fuchs called Neptune Beach but which one easily recognizes as Coney Island. The book opens with a description of a dreary, drizzly summer morning along the row of shops catering to the summer trade, a morning that is bad for business. The merchants are gloomy, especially Mr. Spitzbergen, who runs Ann's soda parlor and depends upon the summer heat for business. Mr. Spitzbergen's soda parlor is the setting against which most of the scenes of the book are played, scenes, many of them terrible in power, written by a mature artist. There is the little rat Moe Karty, a petty gambler who uses the back room to get hot wires on the races; Mr. Shubunka, a fat, oily, lonely man who runs a string of second-rate disorderly houses for the summer trade, renting his apartments from Mr. Spitzbergen, who dabbles in real estate; Shorty, the little bald-headed soda-jerker who tries to make the giantess Madame Pavlovna, a corsetière down the street who eats her morning breakfast at Ann's; Herbert Lurie, the owner of a dress shop nearby, another customer of Ann's, who wants to try marriage again, after many failures, believing that marriage will solve his problems; Arthur, the half-wit dish-washer; and many others.

The action of the book takes place during forty-eight hours, and before the last page is reached, Spitzbergen is murdered by the gambler Moe Karty, who is in desperate need of money to cover up a theft; Shubunka is slugged and run out of the disorderly-house business by racketeers; Lurie almost gets married but backs out at the last moment;

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Shorty spends three dollars on movies and cocktails for Madame Pavlovna but his assault in her apartment is turned aside contemptuously. In short, every character, harried either by the itch to get money, hold on to money, get a woman, or get married, is frustrated.

A brief description of the plot, however, does not do justice to "Low Company." Fuchs is a master of dialogue, his characters live, struggle, breathe and squirm in frenzy. There are pages and pages of superb writing. But in the final analysis the book gets nowhere. "Low Company" is the story of petty lives, of petty tragedies. Fuchs hates all his characters. When he writes with pity, it is a merciless, steely, stiletto kind of pity. A few times we are appalled at what happens to the characters and are just about to lavish our sympathy, when the author pours his icy water over every living thing in Neptune Beach. And here we come to the debit side of Fuchs's artistry. Fuchs, at this stage of his writing, has found no place to lay down his burden. His hate is a slow, burning, consuming hate, and he vents it ruthlessly. The superb humor, the comical situations magnificently described in "Low Company," are actually merciless jabs at his characters. There have been comments that Fuchs, because of his penchant for grotesquerie, stems from Charles Dickens. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. While Dickens hated many of his characters, he had a great love and compassion for his heroes and heroines. Dickens was a confirmed believer in the happy ending. Fuchs is a child of sorrow.

ALBERT HALPER.

Crime Often Pays

Here's to Crime, by Courtney Ryley Cooper. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 467 pages. $2.75.

THE AUTHOR of this exciting book is a former police reporter who has covered two hundred murder trials and was a witness at the execution of Bruno Richard Hauptmann; in addition to numerous magazine articles, he has written "Ten Thousand Public Enemies." He has sublimated a juvenile admiration for bank robbers into a wide acquaintance with the picturesque characters of the underworld, and he vividly portrays for us Johnny the Guy, Eddie the bank robber and the queen of the syndicate sex racket.

His thesis is that crime *does* pay if one is sufficiently criminal, that crime is the biggest industry in America today, with three and a half million people connected with it. For example, $80,000,000 worth of automobiles are stolen each year. The underworld is at our elbows in bars, dance halls and theatres; five big concessions at the Chicago Fair were controlled by the Capone mob. Cooper claims that there are not twenty of our first-class cities in which a non-partisan investigation would not result in a dozen prominent citizens being sent to jail. At least four thousand of our policemen would prove to have criminal records if finger-prints were taken. Tips and other forms of "white money" are looked upon as legitimate income. Crime solving depends largely upon informers.

Cooper's criminals still talk in the best Hollywood style "through slits in the sides of their mouths." He indulges with gusto in the journalistic sport of parole-board baiting. Probation is summarily disposed of in a footnote to the notorious Willie Harrison case. A naïve and quite mistaken use of Super Ego might amuse Freud. Federal prisons as well as J. Edgar Hoover's men come in for a word of

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praise, but a page devoted to the model reformatory at Chillicothe is overbalanced by a nine-page description of desperate criminals being taken to Alcatraz. Such journalistic distortion of proper emphasis characterizes the book throughout. A floundering chapter gives his prescriptions for controlling crime: more executions, desexualization, comment by judges to the juries, slum clearance, parental education, aggrandizement of state police, legislative campaigns and a panacea in the form of a National Board of Inquiry. JAMES HARGAN.

The All-American Follies

A New American History, by W. E. Woodward. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 910 pages. $4.

HAVING wandered leisurely through the wilderness of American history, Mr. Woodward has given an engrossing account of his travels. It may not be history that he has written. Certainly it is not conventional history. But it is an opportunity for Mr. Woodward to discourse on America and for that one may be grateful.

His book has a surprising uniformity of tone which comes, of course, from the author's perspective. Under his skeptical gaze many of the peaks that loom so large in orthodox histories of America are seen to be scarcely more than ant-hills. And, contrariwise, he sees in the shadowy and more remote valleys much of significance in the development of America that has long been neglected.

On such stock characters as Paul Revere he is most entertaining, exercising his dry, ironic wit on the shams that have come out of the past with mythical trappings of awe and reverence. Paul Revere, Mr. Woodward says, was the kind of man one sees at public meetings hurrying off somewhere to get a pitcher of water for the Governor of the state, a faithful little man whose reputation is quite accidental. Too, Mr. Woodward takes delight in showing the economic realities behind such popular tableaux as the Boston Tea Party. As a result of the activities of notorious smugglers like John Hancock, the sale of tea in the American colonies by the East India Tea Company, which held a monopoly throughout the British Empire, dropped from eight hundred thousand pounds to less than one hundred thousand. When the company decided to bring over a boat load of tea and sell it below the smugglers' price, Hancock and others organized a public demonstration. As Mr. Woodward points out, it was a little difficult to make the common man understand why he should protest against cheap tea. But for Mr. Hancock, who owned large stores of smuggled tea, the reason was very clear.

There were few idealists or patriots in the American revolution, Mr. Woodward finds. Washington, with his calm good sense, doing the job before him as best he could, comes nearer to meeting the author's specifications for a hero than any of the hotheads. About Lincoln, the second figure in the American pantheon, Mr. Woodward is more reserved. Lincoln, too, had common sense but in a more complex situation it was often a treacherous guide. Lincoln's gift of language disturbs Mr. Woodward, who finds that the emancipator, like most great rhetoricians and phrase-makers, was frequently inconsistent, sacrificing literal truth to literary expediency.

It is in the great period of expansion after the Civil War that Mr. Woodward is happiest. Here in overabundance are examples of greed, ambition and the ruthless use of power to illustrate the author's general thesis that man, taken collectively, is a sorry specimen. Beginning with the

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due-process clause and the clever way in which it was slipped into the Fourteenth Amendment by a railroad lawyer, and going on through the great land steals and the colossal swindles and grafts of the latter part of the last century, the record, as Mr. Woodward recites it, is gloomy. It is lightened, to be sure, by his dry observations on the persistent stupidity with which human beings prosecute their affairs. Likewise the World War and the boom that followed it offer splendid documentation for his thesis.

Altogether, although this is a very thick book, one is left with the impression that the course of American history is hardly more than a footnote to the long roll of human folly. In fact, the view sometimes seems too narrow, the horizon of the skeptic too close at hand. But Mr. Woodward is always urbane, and if he sometimes looks at the facts of American history as though he were the first person to examine them with critical detachment, he may be forgiven, for he is almost always entertaining.

MARQUIS W. CHILDS.

Novel on Yellow Paper, by Stevie Smith. New York: William Morrow and Company. $2.

In this book the author makes a rather desperate attempt to empty her soul without going to the trouble of arranging and elucidating its contents. She has plenty to say and is sometimes quite funny and entertaining but, from the first, her object is to throw the whole onus of understanding upon the reader and just have a good time herself. To this end she avoids all grammar and punctuation, writes long passages in French and German, and warns prospective critics that she is writing for "Feet-off-the-Ground" people, not "Smug-pugs." The result is a thorough hotch-potch, and though it presents a bold, "progressive" front we can see beneath it a deep and admiring love for all the more smug-pug virtues of the British race.

RICHARD VAUGHAN.

Contributors

LEON GREEN is dean of Northwestern University School of Law at Chicago and Visiting Professor at Yale University School of Law this year. Among his books is "Judge and Jury."

ROBERT CANTWELL, author of "Laugh and Lie Down" and "The Land of Plenty," will have a new novel "The Enchanted City," published late in the spring by Farrar and Rinehart.

EDMUND WILSON is the author, among other books, of "Axel's Castle," "The American Jitters" and "Travels in Two Democracies."

FRED RODELL is the author of "Fifty-Five Men," a book on the Constitutional Convention of 1787. He is an associate professor at the Yale University Law School.

PAUL ROSENFELD, the author of a novel, "The Boy in the Sun," and numerous books and pieces of musical and esthetic criticism, is now completing a second novel.

MURIEL RUKEYSER'S first book. "Theory of Flight," appeared in 1935. She is now working ona book about the first week of the war in Catalonia, "Savage Coast," to be published this spring.

ALBERT HALPER is the author of two widely discussed novels, "The Foundry" and "Union Square."

JAMES HARGAN is resident psychologist at Sing Sing prison.

MARQUIS W. CHILDS, Washington correspondent for The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, is author of "Sweden: Where Socialism is Controlled" and "Sweden: The Middle Way." He has recently finished a novel, "Washington Calling," to be published this spring.

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